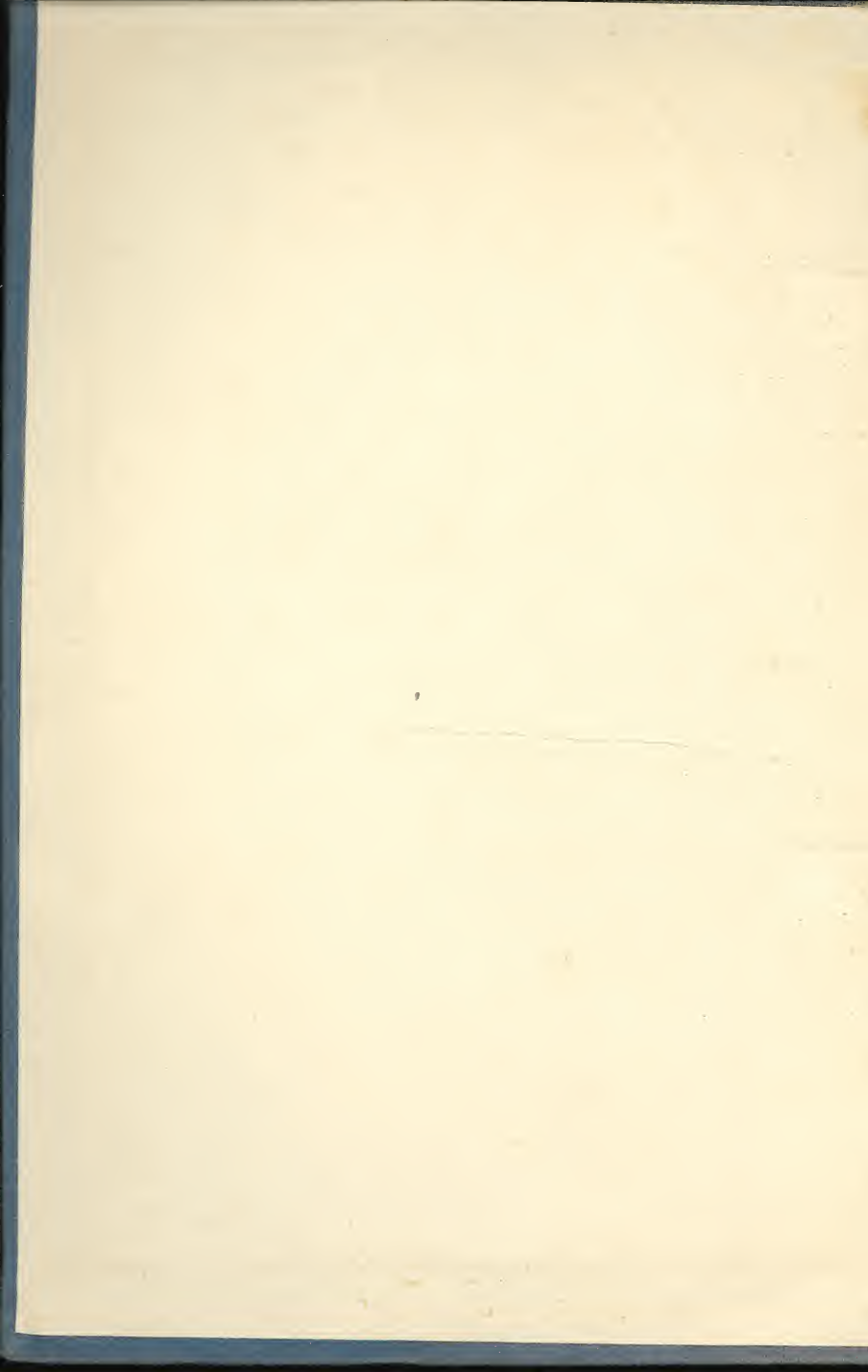


O PEOPLE !

*Robert Cray*



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O PEOPLE!

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

LUCY FLOCKHART

"Displays an energy in description and characterization that undoubtedly commands attention."—*Morning Post*.

# O PEOPLE!

BY  
ROBERT CRAIG

LONDON  
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*First Edition . . 1932*

## PART ONE

### I

‘**A** COUNTRY correspondent informs me of a somewhat remarkable character who has been trekking the Border and Clydesdale districts. This person evidently has a bee in his bonnet which buzzes without ceasing. His pet hobby is the entry of Scotland as a separate entity into the deliberations of the League of Nations, and he seems to be *au fait* with the intentions of that distinguished body—more, perhaps, than can be said of some of our leading statesmen! Recently this man, who appears to be an ex-service man and is certainly a tramp, gave a series of addresses in Melrose, Jedburgh, Peebles, and Culter. Near Culter is, of course, Drumblatterie Castle, the ancestral home of the Earl of Spurhardie, the head of the Goloshin family. The Goloshins have been settled at Drumblatterie since the days of William the Lion.’

Thus the Gossip of the *Spear*, Sir Frederick Saltire's daily. Some days later the *Spear* again had occasion to chronicle the activities of this remarkable character, but not in the gossip column.

## 'SCOTLAND AND LEAGUE

### CRAZED MAN'S OBSESSION

Brought before the Broseburgh bench for causing a disturbance at the cross there on Saturday evening, John Grant, of no occupation or fixed address, was found guilty and sentenced to seven days or one guinea.

Stating that he had no money to pay a fine, and that in any case he was prepared to go to prison for his principles, the accused created a sensation in court by commencing a long harangue in which he stated his determination to gain Scotland an entry into the League of Nations. Grant, who evidently suffers from some morbid obsession, resisted violently when being led from the dock, and then bursting into tears, declared that the spirit of William Wallace would avenge him.

The presiding magistrate, Bailie Sim, remarked that accused was evidently a man

of violent and subversive beliefs. The laws of the country, he added, must be observed, and the claims of justice would be honoured in Broseburgh without fear or favour. Sentence was then passed.

This was the only case listed for the day, and had it not been for that Bailie Sim would have received the rare distinction of a pair of white gloves.'

When the seven days expired the accused was released, although that event was not considered of sufficient importance to merit press comment, he having not reached the plane of interest attained by bankrupt financiers and international crooks. Exhilarated by the feeling of martyrdom and angered by a sense of wrong, he directed his steps to Glasgow and arrived there, dusty and almost penniless, on a fine July night.

He knew Glasgow fairly well. He had been born there. Out of the thirty-six years of his life twenty had been spent in it. Consequently he was not able to view the great city steadily engulfing him without a sensation of melancholy. Once he had friends there.

As he advanced he contrasted mentally

the immaculate raiment he had then worn with his present ragged and disreputable appearance, and smiled grimly. Once he had been hatted and gloved. But there had been no cause then. There was a cause now.

He made his entry by Rutherglen and reached by course Bridgeton, a district renowned for outspoken belief. In that drab agglomeration of mean streets he hastened his pace unconsciously. He was not indifferent to the vexations of the poor, but fresh from the open scene he suffered a sensation of horror at the vision of dreariness and privation. The fact that a midsummer sky was overhead added distaste to his reflections. A wet night and a wild night would have assorted better with those dismal canyons; the rain would have cleansed them and the wind have purified them. But on this evening oppressiveness lay along the streets and an occasional unpleasant odour wafted to his nostrils.

At a corner, outside a public-house, an old man and an old woman were singing together. What they sang it was impossible to tell. The bold illumination from the shop revealed their parchment faces and stooped bodies. They were hand in hand, and moved



their slow hirpling forms along the gutter with little scuffling steps. Without hope—and more terrible, without despair—they turned lack-lustre eyes upon the passers-by, for they had reached beyond that stage when despair can frighten. They had no further capacity for suffering, and were indifferent.

Stung to compassion by such misery, Grant stopped some paces after he had passed them, turned, and placed two pennies in the woman's hand. Ignoring her quavered thanks, he passed on quickly, as though ashamed.

He felt shocked and outraged. On either hand the grimy buildings stretched to an uncanny height and the sky became immeasurably remote. "Oh," he reflected, "had that woman been my mother! What would I think?"

It was long since he had been in a city. He had shunned them. The little Border towns, the quiet villages of Solway side and the Berwick march—these he knew. They gave him peace of mind. Once, when he had first commenced his vagrancy, he had penetrated to the glens of Argyll and the recollection of their awesome masses still had power to shake him. The effects of trench

warfare would not be ousted from his senses, the equilibrium of his brain was too delicate to risk being unbalanced by the macabre jests of nature. So he loved the pleasant valleys of the south country, the green woodlands and the green fields.

Nothing would have brought him to Glasgow save the urge that was within. He had a cause. That cause might yet take him into the remote indifferent Highlands, were it necessary. It had certainly brought him to Glasgow. During his sojourn in jail he had reasoned over his inability to gain an enduring audience. The explanation had been vouchsafed to him, and he realized that to penetrate the citadel of sloth one must first break down the walls of enceinte. He had done so, surely! Tweeddale, the Merse, the Stewartry—he had preached through them all. Now did the great mass of stone lie before him as Babylon lay before Cyrus. It was there, on the banks of Clyde, awaiting the conqueror!

The almost smug satisfaction of the thought sustained him as he walked. He felt apart from other men. The curses and threats of Isaiah and Jeremiah, whom he loved to quote, recurred to him. He likened

the seventy years' sufferings of Tyre to the unemployment that haunted the city wherein he walked. Were the people of Glasgow to listen to him they might yet be redeemed. Their ships might cease to howl. They might once more build ships—if they hearkened to his cause.

But he could not immediately drive the recollection of the old man and the old woman from his mind.

Hunger was no novelty to him. He had experienced rain, chill, and exposure, and he had not complained. There was a wan charm in the thought of rotting in eternal sleep in the autumnal secrecies of a sequestered wood. This possibility had occurred to him frequently and he contemplated it without alarm. There was no shame in failing against nature, of which oneself was but an infinitesimal fraction. The earth would be beneath and the sky above, the birds would sing around and nothing more matter. It was a pleasant pagan thought.

But the old man and the old woman would know nothing of that.

For them was the mephitic alley and the squalid single-end, the model, and the night-shelter, and the poorhouse. And at the end

death would come to them as the thing of terrors, the lurker at the door, the ravisher of the sick-bed.

The utter absence of any thought or emotion in their eyes obsessed him as he walked.

"Surely," he thought timidly, "if I can manage what I want, people will understand and reorganize. But there's a lot to do."

He strode into the heart of the city, a tall, emaciated man with features of so ascetic a cast as to appear almost wolfish. In time his pace slackened, for the pavements were sore on feet used to the open road. He was feeling hungry, and thought without regret of the two pennies he had given the old woman. They had been trysted for his supper. A drink of water from a public fountain would be sufficient for his needs, he decided, and the Kelvingrove Park was open all night. He would hear the sententious chimes of the University and the nervous notes of the birds at dawn.

Now that he was in the busier central streets he was conscious of his contrasting rags and turned into a quieter place. He smiled then, realizing what had urged his retreat from the pretentious crowds. But

that had been another age, and surely he had been another man.

The street led uphill and the lack of food was telling on him. Panting, he leant against a lamp-post, and mused on the last time he had passed that way. And he laughed suddenly, reflecting that sixteen years had passed.

Someone was coming in his direction ; he could hear the light patter of feet. In a moment a young woman appeared in the light of the further lamp-post, and becoming a silhouette as she passed it, was within a few yards of him. Her pace slackened, she hesitated, and stopping before him and smiling, she said brightly : "Hullo."

He returned her greeting soberly, surprised that she should think him worth accosting.

"It's a fine night," she ventured after a dubious cough, observing that he was not disposed to conversation.

"It *is* a fine night," he said compassionately, "and I think you'd be better to go home."

Her laughter was not unmusical. "You're not keen on early hours yourself, are you ? You look lonely. Poor boy."



He disengaged her hand from the lapel of his coat. "Go home," he said quietly.

The girl seemed hurt by his words even while their tone was reassuring. "You're trying to be funny, aren't you?" she said coaxingly, and laid an imperious small hand on his. The distaste in her smile chilled him. He stepped out from the lamp-post, allowing the oblique rays to fall on him.

She was disconcerted by the poverty that his position had concealed. In that moment he studied her face, in which the eyes were unnaturally brilliant, the lips a scarlet bow. A tight necklace of large imitation pearls encircled her neck, and she wore a hat covered with black sequins. Her coat and skirt were of black satin. The sheen of them was as oppressive as the pungent perfume that she used.

Her mood passed and she laughed, adopting an intimate attitude and another tone to him. "What are you hanging about here for? Are you going to rob a bank? It's useless. All the money in Glasgow belongs to me."

He explained that he was tired; that he had been walking all week.

"So have I," she said.

He murmured that he was sorry for her, and observed how her manner softened at his words of sympathy. She looked at him gratefully.

"In this world," she said, "about all we've time for is sorrow for ourselves."

Grant did not answer, believing that the apparition of the girl had confused him. Vaguely he heard her make some friendly remark and saw her gaze turn to the busy street in the distance. And courteously he replied to her.

"What's wrong?" she demanded sharply.

Everything grew dark to him, a sinking darkness, and he groped unsteadily for the area rail that he knew should be there.

"What's the matter?" she repeated urgently—irritably, he thought. He assured her that he was all right, hearing his own voice at a great distance, and stumbled awkwardly on to the steps of a business office. Instinctively he sank his head in his hands, and sat for a little. Gradually his senses returned. He explained that it was faintness, only momentary. He had not eaten that day.

Feeling that such an explanation called for another, he commenced some rambling

remarks about the advantages of tramping on an empty stomach. He stopped abruptly, and looked at her with appealing eyes.

"I wasn't hungry," he said.

The outraged belief that Grant knew when he gave away his two pennies returned when his unsteady eyes saw the money that the girl held out to him. He was sickened by her kindness as he had been horrified by misery, and like lightning flashes pictures shaped in his bemused mind. In the emotional stress of his visions the face of the young girl grew and lessened. The dark building beyond her dimmed and faded, her face approached closer, marked with anxiety and helplessness; all else disappeared from his sight save the features in which a vital sense ordered him to discern the hope, the charity, and the misery of the world.

"Take it," she said impatiently. "If a slop sees us here . . . Do you want the clink?" She regarded him disappointedly. "My, but you're a right fool!" she said candidly. "Anybody would have been glad to knock me down for it, bag and all."

Grant stumbled to his feet. "I'm sorry to refuse, if my refusal angers you. You're kind."



“You’re sorry . . . I know,” she went on hurriedly, “and that was why . . . All right, then.” She replaced the money in her hand-bag, remarking casually that his manner and his clothes did not seem to match. He did not answer and she accepted the rebuff good-humouredly. “D’you know,” she said shyly, “you’re kind of queer. I don’t believe you’ve anywhere to go. That right? If you like I’ll take you where you can get a night’s lodging.” She dismissed lightly his protest that he had no claim on her friends. “You’re like Solomon—you’re all noes. What you need’s a good tightener and a good sleep.”

## II

Passing through Blythswood Square they walked down a street that ran beneath another street. That which they walked in was long and narrow, and it bore a sinister look in the darkness. At the far end they turned into a broad thoroughfare which Grant recognized, and proceeding along it for a little entered a side-street that was poor-looking and sombre. Without hesitation the young woman led him into a close and up a stair at the far end. Ascending

in absolute darkness, he groped his way by the click of his companion's heels. He heard the insertion of a key.

"Come in," she said. "Have you a match? Here's a box. Strike one."

She closed the door. Observing an apartment in front, he walked straight in, but his movement extinguished the match. While he was fumbling for another a metallic clink sounded and the girl said: "Put it to the gas. The penny's in."

The light revealed a small kitchen very sparsely furnished. It contained a table and several chairs and a recess bed, and a square of linoleum practically destitute of pattern was on the floor. On the mantelpiece were two flat-irons and a small biscuit-tin with a Chinese design, and over it was hung a picture of a Highland Scene with Cattle.

"This is a bachelor girl's flat," she said laconically. "You read about them in the papers."

"Whose house is this?"

"It's mine." She observed his disgust without emotion. "Ah, don't be stupid. Whose house did you think you were coming to? You won't be robbed, there's nothing

you can be robbed of . . . unless one thing," she added as an afterthought.

Removing her hat and coat, she threw them on the bed, and after inviting him to sit down, busied herself with a gas stove. He sat, in considerable agitation of mind.

He had long since formulated an ethical outlook, and it was rigid. He believed in a perfect standard of morality and was convinced that no society could exist in which the continence of men and the virtue of women were not prescribed. It was a belief bred in him, part of the code of the class from which he came and transmitted from an ancestry of austere and sincere men and women. From those strains of decent country people he had inherited a fastidious aversion to debauch, to the meretriciousness of dissipation. There had been departures from that standard in his family, many of them, in every generation ; but in spite of backsliders the standard had never been lowered.

In him this creed was retained in absolute strength. During his wanderings he had noted and avoided the outcasts of society ; he had pitied them, but it was pity mingled with aversion. There was a horror in contemplating human degradation when

the personal evidences of it were so very obviously degraded. He hated poverty, and reserved his sympathy for the male victims.

Poverty accorded best with masculinity ; it was less debased then. He felt so, reflecting that the career to which naturally gravitated irresponsible and vicious women, and which was so closely allied to the criminal world, was a thousand times lower than that to which any man could fall. He blamed himself bitterly for allowing a temporary vertigo, or a panic fear of illness in that long deserted street, to overturn a lifetime's elevated resolve. Surely, he thought, he had sunk low.

The sensation of lassitude was returning, and it brought the certainty of the folly of desiring to leave the house at once ; it might be hunger and exhaustion—he was uncertain if it was that or sudden illness. Despite repugnance, he admitted an unexpected display of charity which, more than likely, had been preordained. That instruments of diverse quality were used for the furtherance of affairs he knew ; his favourite book afforded him examples. Yet that was no reason for an approach to folly or a weakening

of principle. He looked at the girl with a feeling of distaste.

"How old are you?" he asked.

"I'm eighteen."

She flitted swiftly about the kitchen. Immediately the kettle commenced to boil she poured hot water into the teapot and allowed it to stand for a moment. Emptying that, she replenished the teapot with more hot water and with tea-leaves and set it on the corner of the stove, returning to her duties at the table. He smiled unwillingly when she turned to him at last and said: "Draw in your chair."

His scruples vanished before the sophistries of his appetite, and he ate heartily. The girl, on her part, preferred to minister to the needs of her guest. There was little conversation. Their disjointed remarks betrayed their uneasiness, and as if conscious of this, they became latterly silent. When the meal was finished Grant collected a few crumbs from the tablecloth and deposited them on his plate.

"I enjoyed that," he said simply.

"That's good."

She chose a cigarette, lit it, and watched the smoke dreamily for a time. "What do



you do ? ” she asked him finally, as though goaded by his silence.

“ I’m a tramp.”

“ You’ve got on well, haven’t you ! ”

“ What do *you* do ? ”

She laughed, staring at him the while.

“ Claire is my name. Liar, says you.”

“ You’re not afraid of this locality ? ”

“ I’m afraid of a few things, so one extra fear doesn’t matter, does it ? ” She yawned, and going to the mirror surveyed her yellow hair and painted face dispassionately. “ You don’t look like a tramp,” she said, without turning round. “ I suppose you’re down on your luck. It’s a hell of a life, isn’t it ? ”

“ If you’ve nowhere else to go you could stay here for a day or two,” she added, watching him through the mirror. “ It’s company.”

He felt fewer scruples now in accepting charity so frankly offered. The meal had removed from him the gaunt dourness that he had thought was principle. He asked her if she lived alone, and she said that she did.

“ How many rooms are in this house ? ”

“ This kitchen and a bedroom.”

“ I’ll sleep here, if I may.”

“ All right,” she said, and commenced to clear the supper dishes.

## III

Grant awoke to find hot sunshine streaming through the window. There was no clock in the kitchen, but he judged the morning to be well advanced. He sat up and strained his ears for a sound from the neighbouring apartment, but there was none. Either Claire slumbered or she was out. Rising, he gazed from the window to a medley of dingy back courts and dwelling-houses. The shabby aspect of them was intensified by the pervading heat and sunshine.

He splashed cold water on his face and dried it with a towel hanging over a roller. Then on an impulse he stepped quietly into the little passage and opening the door of the bedroom, looked in. It was empty.

There was a garish cheapness in the appearance of the room and its appointments that jarred, and there were in it some surprising amenities. On the mantelpiece was a handsome little clock that indicated the hour of eleven. A portable gramophone was in one corner; in another a what-not containing a collection of books.

He inspected these last curiously. Cheap showy publications filled one shelf, perhaps as a kind of immoral support, and that be-

neath held some tales of a different theme and another time: *Beulah*, *Queechy*, *The Wide, Wide World*.

The last-named reminded him that it was time for him to be going.

He examined *Queechy*. It bore a printed gummed slip stating that it was an award from Smithyhill Higher Grade School to Flora Duncan for good attendance, June 1890.

On the mantelpiece were two vases and they both held flowers. On a side-table stood a glass dish with flowers, and a tea-cup beside it contained a solitary red rose. The picture on the wall behind was of red roses, and the wallpaper was an adornment of forget-me-nots. The occupant of the room was evidently fond of flowers, though whether she admired *Beulah* and forget-me-nots or more sophisticated reading and red roses was as yet conjectural.

He discovered a shaving outfit in the kitchen, washed himself, and was putting a polish on his boots when the girl returned. She set down an armful of messages on the table and looked at him approvingly. "It's a stifler of a day," she said. "I wish I was at Rothesay."

She was quietly dressed and might have



been any young woman going out to do a day's work. Her costume was reserved in shade and design, and her demeanour was quiet also. The girl's nose was short and straight; she was yellow-haired and grey-eyed and had a pale and not too clear complexion. She was not in any way extraordinary to see, and her eyes alone were notable. They were intelligent and they were steady.

Humming brightly, she removed her coat and put her purchases away. "It would be a rare day for a walk," she remarked. Her glance flickered momentarily over his clothes. ". . . If it wasn't that I've to tidy the house. I hope you made yourself at home. Were you in the room? Oh—the books! Mixed lot, aren't they?" She was pensive for a moment. "D'you know, I wouldn't like anything to happen to some of those books." He remarked that they were in queer company. "They are," she admitted, "but I don't like to put them in a box. I like to see their backs. There's a simple look about them."

"They're not *your* school prizes."

"They were my mother's. You know how some wee incident suddenly jumps into your mind years after? I mind one Sunday when I was a kid pulling them all out on to the

floor, and lying there raking through them. And the sun came in and shone right on me just as it's doing the now." She laughed, fingering the corner of the table. "I can even mind the pattern of the carpet, almost. Well, I never see those books but I think of that. Funny, isn't it?"

"Had you a happy home?"

"I suppose so. I don't know." She moved restlessly about. "Suppose you were a girl and your father was a boozier. Suppose your mother worked all day, did office cleaning, kept the house going, paid the rent. Suppose your old man was always nagging. They say women nag. If you could hear a man!"

"Suppose you weren't very cute, didn't know much—'what every young girl should know,' that sort of thing—and suppose you were happier outside the house than in. Ah well.

"My father was killed by a motor-car and serve him dam' well right. When they went to tell mother she'd a black eye that he'd given her. I'd started to get a half-decent wage, and I was beginning to take my mother's part, too. Things looked cheery. I was glad my father was killed."

She stopped and gazed at him resentfully. Breathlessly she continued : “ Things looked cheery. Well, I was knocking about with a chap. He was a good bit older than me ; about thirty, I think. A regular nut. He wore canary gloves, and spats, and sported a cigarette-holder. I used to call it the gun. I thought he was only a step or two below the Almighty, I can tell you. When we met he always raised his hat completely ; didn’t just touch it. And he knew the right side of the pavement. Know the canal banks out past Anniesland ? Ah well . . .

“ Mother had an illness, and she got chill and pneumonia—all over ! Mother dead and no one left. Pure hell being an only child. I had to give up my work. Then—he was a married man. He was a dirty skunk, too. I could have balanced all his decency on the end of a wax vesta. I sold the furniture and took lodgings. We hadn’t friends ; they’d all sheered off long before and I didn’t like to ferret them out. Ever looked over the Jamaica Bridge at night ? Have you ?

“ I wrapped the thing up and shoved it in a midden. Oh, my Christ, I murdered it ! ”

The girl’s voice trailed into an agonized

moan, and he sprang to her side. "No more," he cried angrily, "I didn't ask for this," and tried to soothe her, at his wits' end what to do. When she looked up agony was on every feature of her paling face, but she murmured with difficulty: "Well, you're getting it. . . "

"I hate to hear all this," he said, trembling.

"Last week an M.P. was saying in the papers that the only real school is the school of experience. He said a mouthful. I wish his daughters were in my place. Ever had your name in the papers? I have. Just like being a society beauty. I had half a column in the front page. Only they called me Macara. Flora Macara—that's my name. They might have called me Miss Macara, but they didn't.

"Well," she said with a rapid return to composure, "after that there were schemes to do great things for me, but they didn't seem to work. Nice wee bodies squinted over their specs. at me and said 'Poor, poor thing'—ah well, it was just as if they was talking to some sort of filthy animal and I didn't like it. It's nice to be treated like a human being. That right? Then

I met Minnie Sanderson, and this is her house, really. She's away just now for three months."

"How is it going to end?"

"Do'know. Do you?"

"This world wasn't made for you or me. What hope is there in life for you?" he exclaimed sadly.

"Aye, what," she agreed coolly. "It's a good thing there's a better world ahead, if what we're told is true. I don't believe that, myself. It might be worse than this, if that's possible."

"Hope is a great thing," the man said thoughtfully. "It keeps me going."

"What d'you hope for?" she demanded with some scorn.

"I hope to create a state of affairs that will make such as you impossible and such as you happy."

"Ach!" she cried contemptuously, "You're a dreamer. Better for yourself if you acted the pig, like the rest."

"Believe and ye shall be saved," he urged, leaning forward excitedly. "There was no Bible through there."

For a second she stared at him in stunned surprise. "And there won't be while this



house is lived in by Flora Macara," she declared flatly. "I'm not daft."

"I find in the Bible all that I want in help," he said soberly. "What I seek in that book I can find."

"Oh, then you're another preaching johnny," she rejoined, with mingled pity and scorn. "Well, find comfort in it, and God help you. There's more comfort in a nip of brandy." She laughed gleefully at his horrified protest. "Can the Bible give me a name, or a job? You open it and show me the place. Show me chapter and verse. Give me something solid. I can't live on quotations. Can the Bible make me forget things if I wanted to forget them? You tell me where and I'll panel the wall with Bibles.

"Listen to me," she continued in an altered tone. "I'm human, and I like being treated that way. Don't chuck prayers at me, and don't tell fancy jokes. If you'll not do that, I think I could eat out of your hand."

"Last night you showed me the spirit of all that's finest in the Bible. You showed me charity."

"Aye, maybe. And I suppose there's

charity in some countries where the Bible was never heard of."

"I can repay you by showing you where happiness is to be found," he urged eagerly.

"I've heard some queer birds cheep in my day, but I've never heard a cockatoo like you." Flora turned her clear gaze on him and looked him through. "You haven't suffered much, I'm thinking, or you wouldn't talk like that. That's blethers. People who've suffered don't win comfort as easy as you seem to do. It's the country roads *you stravaig*."

"I have a religion and a cause. They're both good friends to me," he said simply.

"All right. I'm pleased if you're pleased. You'll let me stand you a new suit of clothes."

"I won't let you stand me a new suit of clothes." A bright flame of colour burned on either cheek. "I'd give a lot to have you think properly."

"I didn't think you'd anything to give," she could not prevent herself saying. "It was that made me think of it."

#### IV

During the next meal Flora's mind was occupied with schemes regarding Grant, and

the retention of him. Unaccountably he had become essential to her happiness. She liked him.

She was delighted by the look of utter indifference in his eyes when they chanced to alight on her. He was an enigma to her. His poverty, his abstracted friendliness, the absorbed asceticism of his face, won and fascinated her. She possessed an acquired preference for a man who looked clean-living, and she knew instinctively that Grant was that.

Forlornly, she feared that she could neither intimidate nor glamour him, but divined a crazy sense of independence in him that would put him in obligation. That guaranteed a claim, if a tenuous one. A crazy sense, and this man was perhaps literally crazy, as she thought with a slight shiver of the strange light that flashed in his eyes. He might be a religious fanatic. Many had suffered from hallucinations since the war, and those few words about repayment might presage anything—he might arise and throttle her. And for one icy moment she visioned her name once more in the papers, still plain Macara, but dead this time. Quite wisely Flora reflected that too much religion could



have an effect similar to too much whisky. Yet, she reflected with pessimism, she might truly be murdered some day—things happen—and there would be more satisfaction in being murdered by someone she liked.

It would be nice, she thought, to have him hanging about the house always, to see his sullen face and glowing eyes, and to hear him ask her if she would come with him to a theatre or a dance hall or maybe just for a car run. Not every night of course, but pretty often. It would be nice.

Then some day he would just slowly and deliberately hold her in his arms and kiss her. He wouldn't call her 'kid' or 'baby'; he would simply call her Flora, and perhaps kiss her on the forehead first. That would be unusual and distinguished. Then he would say: 'I love you.'

She trembled with pleasure at the thought. As she sat solemnly munching and swallowing, rosy visions shaped and sped before her. She saw them taking a 'bus run to the Trosachs; going down to Gourock on a Sunday and having a motor-boat trip across to Dunoon; visiting the dog-racing or the dirt track or a city cinema, she with a box of chocolates and he with a new soft hat. She

imagined them together in one of the new housing schemes, he working at the garden and she smiling down at him from the kitchenette—married. But this last ambition she dismissed as prematurely daring and one that should lie abeyant meantime. The satisfaction derived from these thoughts lingered on Flora's face and she was smiling with a secret feeling of felicity when her eyes encountered his. He was finishing his portion of a cold apple-tart. She indicated it, lodging what she was eating in her cheek the while, and asked if it was good.

He ignored the question. "Flora, after this meal I'm going."

"Where?" she demanded with a sudden sinking of the heart. "Away?" she echoed him weakly. "Away where?"

"Anyway, I'm going."

She pretended absorption in her food, thinking desperately. But she could only say ultimately: "You're in a great hurry, surely."

"I want to keep my self-respect."

"I'm not stealing your self-respect; am I? I've never said a thing," she muttered resentfully. "You're free to come and go as you please."

"Yes, but when I go, Flora," he said gently, "I go for good."

The girl sat with compressed lips and lowered eyes. "I don't want you to do that," she said at length.

"I'm sponging on you."

"For all that time!" she exclaimed satirically.

"It's long enough to me."

"Oh, I know! . . . Too long, maybe. You're religious, aren't you?"

Grant regarded her sadly. "Flora, you are very pitiful."

The girl stirred uneasily, and watching him as he sat with his eyes averted she asked him why.

"Because you took pity on me who can be of no earthly use to you. You were sorry for me. I hate pity—but I know when it's sincere."

"So do I."

"If I could help you, Flora, I would do it. But what can I do? God knows, this is no return for kindness."

Against his transparency of speech Flora had no answer. Resentment and anger worked in her, and bitterest disappointment. Staring steadily at the table that he might

not see the tears of thwarted intention that gathered in her eyes, she preserved a stubborn silence.

"If I could help you, Flora, I would do it. I can do nothing. I'll leave within the hour. It's a rough road."

"It would be an easy road if you were here," she said suddenly. "Ay would it. But it doesn't matter," she added in a quieter tone, "I can see you want to go away. Oh, it would!" she exclaimed eagerly, turning on him a smile full of sweetness. "I've no friends. I wanted you here. You're different. I knew you were poor, didn't I? Well! And I was fed up."

"You don't know how fed up I was. Some folk think it's a great joke. You don't. It wasn't charity. I never meant it to be charity. I'm not grudging that. But I hoped you'd have been in less of a hurry."

"Listen!" she continued rapidly, and going round to his side of the table, bent over him. "Listen, this isn't like you!" Bending nearer so that her short hair fell against his cheek, she whispered: "You're more like *Queechy*. You know! Sort of reliable. Like *Queechy*. I like you that way. You're nice. I don't want you to

go away. Say you won't. Promise. Just say: 'I won't go away for a wee while, Flora.' "

"Oh, you're a bad devil," he muttered, pushing her from him.

She stared at him disappointedly. "Too much *Queechy*! Ah well . . . That's your thanks. Eat up, lad! Here's to you! *And* the soldier's farewell."

"All right," he returned dourly.

"Chuck a sermon at me in return for the food I've chucked at you and call it quits! Say you're sorry for me and go. That clears your conscience, doesn't it? Maybe you'll keep away from West Regent Street to-night. I was there before you."

"It's not fair to taunt me," he said, agitated by her anger. "Don't blame me for doing what I think is right."

"I can blame you for seeing both sides of the question—your side and the wrong side. See mine for a change. Listen! I want you to stay——"

"No."

"Oh, I know!" She laughed gleefully. "You're afraid of this street. Afraid you might get a tousing some night! I wouldn't be so cowardly. A man shouldn't be a



crapper. You go and warm your feet—they're cold!" she continued with inimitable good-humoured scorn. "Sorry! Didn't know you had the wind up. Very sorry!" She added to herself quite audibly: "He's a crapper. Ay are you—and you're afraid of me. Ah well, cheerio!—and mind the step." She commenced to sing in a high penetrating voice. "Didn't know I could sing, did you? We're aye learning. Oh, you! I've heard of human ingratitude . . ." She glanced over her shoulder at him, laughing lightheartedly. "What!—not away yet?"

"I'm going—now." His hand was on the door knob when her arms were flung around his neck and her face thrust wildly into his.

"You're not going," she declared passionately. "You can't go—you won't go. Listen, listen. You won't leave me, will you now? Me that was kind to you. Oh, you won't go. You won't." In her access of despair her face was transfigured, becoming innocent, her blurred eyes and drooping mouth significant of nothing but child-like disappointment. A torrent of appeal rushed from her lips, senseless repetitive pleadings. Her voice rose hysterically as he tried to wrest her grip away.



An intense sensation of pity overwhelmed him. She might be as innocent in her motives as a child. She was pathetic in her loneliness, in her isolation from society, branded with the stigmata of despair. And when he saw her distraught face so close to his, her eyes overcast with tears and her body quivering with her wretchedness, that wretchedness infected him and her sorrows were his own.

Surely this young girl was not to be avoided. Rather was she a waif, a leaf in the wind, tossed with no volition of her own into a world of horror that would ultimately make her akin to its choicest daughters and slay her in the end, as it did them.

What good was there in throwing a word of sympathy to her and hastening on, as to a leper? What hope for her when such as he desired to pass by on the other side?

He saw in her the whole fabric of existence resolved in terms of woe; the ages had passed in pomp and panoply, their achievements echoed down the years; prince and priest had mocked and mowed, man had fought and woman had travailed; the vast encrustation of life revealed a dizzy accumulation of knowledge, science, and art; the

peoples of the earth bowed to their own shadows and exulted in their increase; the prophets of progress preached resounding platitudes—and young girls . . .

“Flora,” he said gently.

He saw his way very clearly. He would be as a brother to her. Perhaps it had been preordained—how otherwise had he walked up that street the previous night and how had she walked down it? They would be meeting on the basis of human sympathy and help. They would benefit each other—he, at any rate, would benefit her—and with a glow of pleasure he thought of the selfless delight in raising a fellow-creature.

In this city where he had come to give counsel he had found sorrow, and his cause might be glorified by the lesser light of joy. From what labyrinths of infamy might he not be successful in saving her, from what chartless seas of restless moan might he not be salving her shuddering spirit! Of all sweet deeds none was greater than the pleasant deed of charity.

It was charity indeed to hearten the weak and strengthen the despairing—and here was work for him.

“Flora.”

She raised her head and regarded him intently. "You won't go—now?"

"Not now."

Flora smiled with quiet contentment.

"We'll be brother and sister."

"—To the world."

"And to ourselves."

Flora nodded submissively, and in some embarrassment, for her success brought an instant feeling of disquiet, commenced to clear the table, placing the dishes in the sink and running water on them.

But with her uneasiness was triumph, for if she had not persuaded him to burn his boats completely, he had compelled her to perform that action with hers. She guessed that much. It was a defeat for her even in the midst of victory, although the slight astringency caused by his untamable outlook was not unpleasant although irritating. The prospect of a complete inversion of her standards of existence was exhilarating, and she felt well satisfied. He would be near her, at any rate, and she felt that it was better to face the world with him as a sister than not to face it with him at all.

## PART TWO

### I

FOR the first time in ten years Grant had the sensation of being caged. He thought resentfully of the promise he had given, and a look of savage pity shone in his eyes while he watched the girl working so industriously at the window. He was sorry for her. His whole heart beat sorrow for her sorrows. And he hated her for making him break his resolves.

Once in his life he had liked the company of young ladies. In his later teens he had known several, and in 1913, in a life not dreaming of wars or causes, he had been introduced to a girl of the same age as himself with whom he walked out steadily. Every Wednesday they had met at seven o'clock and they had gone to a picture-house. Every Saturday they had a rendezvous at six-thirty and went to a music-hall. On the Sundays they met at three and had a walk in a park followed by tea at her home.

She had not been difficult to get on with ; her conversation was long but not profound, and while she may not have fully comprehended everything that he said to her, in her favour it could be stated that she listened without impatience, and at ordered intervals would exclaim "Fancy!" or "My!" or "It just shows you!" as evidence of the complete confidence his intelligence enjoyed in her estimation, and as a voucher for her submission and docility in the days when their friendship might reach to a legally ordained relationship.

As she was fond of sweets he never omitted to bring her a supply of the kind she liked. Her preference was for lime-juice gums. These she would accept with an "Oh, thanks very much!" and after offering him one would chew them with a concentration that argued well for her interest in more serious things. She would still be chewing when they reached the close in Dumbarton Road, up which her parents had their home, but he never remembered seeing her produce them in the house.

Her father was a little moth-eaten man with a drooping moustache who worked in a railway office, and he always treated Grant



with deference. Her mother, too, thought the world of him, and her loud laughter and comically resigned phrase, "Ah well, we're a' jist common five-eights," revealed the sterling sincerity of her nature.

When the mother retired to mask the tea the daughter invariably followed, exclaiming, "Oh, poor mother! I can't leave her to slave through there herself," and then the master of the house would cock a meditative eye upon his guest and say encouragingly: "Did you see yon in the paper the day? What d'you think of yon? Aye, aye. Man, they're a great lot. But I think Asquith's all right. Yes, I think so. A good man. Aye. A good man. And did you see what Lloyd George said? He's a curio. Still, I think he's a good man."

Then he would lovingly stroke his moustache and say, smiling: "He was a great man, Mr. Gladstone. Yes, a very great man. I can mind fine when the papers were all full of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Beaconsfield. That was Mr. Disraeli, you know; he became Lord Beaconsfield. Aye, they were a great lot. And there was Sir Stafford Northcote and Lord Hartington and Lord Salisbury. A great lot. And Lord Randolph Churchill.



He was ay a cock-sparrow in the cartoons. I do'know why, but they ay made him the cock-sparrow. I don't think we've got men like them nowadays, John. No, I don't think so."

And Grant would say: "It must have been very interesting to have lived then. I can remember Queen Victoria's death. I was six then."

"Aye, a great queen, John. A great queen. Times aren't the same. We live in softer times." Here he would stroke the plush upholstery of the armchair wherein he sat. "Ha, ha. Young folk starting thegither have a better chance than when Lizzie and me started." And he would smile with ghastly ingratiation on the guest.

His wife would reappear to lay the tea-cloth on the parlour table, the daughter hastening first to remove the red baize cover and the plant from it. Thereafter the daughter brought through sugar and ham sandwiches and butter and fancy cakes and a lot of odd things. Every time she appeared in the parlour she shot a smiling glance at Grant, who always smiled back. Why he smiled he did not know, and his willingness to smile secretly annoyed him, but he felt

that it would be ungracious not to do so under the circumstances. So he always watched for her smile, and returned it.

"Now!" the mother would say when everything was set, and the teapot was brought with an obsequious sea-green cosy beside it. "My, but I'm sure you must be tired, John, with that lassie o' mine trailing you a' ower Glesca! She's the case, I'm telling you! Ah well, this'll freshen you up. Hee-hee. I was just telling the father there that when she cooks for a man if he'll no' be fou he'll no' be fasting. She's such a one for the cooking. She's fair daft on it."

"A good cook, a good cook," the father would interject with approval, while his offspring simpered and stammered negation.

"Deedaye," would say the mother complacently, "she's no' one that'll let the fireside rust. But jist you sit in, John, and eat up. A healthy man should take some filling. Hee-hee."

Sometimes during the meal they would discuss the weather, and sometimes they agreed that it looked like rain, and sometimes they thought that it would clear up. Occasionally they would all swap reminiscences of the 1911 Exhibition in Kelvingrove

Park, and the two parents would gravely regret that John had not known their daughter at that time. He would have made things so interesting for her. The mother would recall the amenity of being able to sample a delicious cup of cocoa with a biscuit and two chocolate cubes for a penny at the stall of a well-known firm. And the daughter would shyly tell how she had seen the free travel films advertising a Canadian railway.

But the sire preferred music and would relate an experience of one very wet Saturday when he had been one of three listening out the programme of a band with pink tunics and green braiding. "And we were all alone," he would say impressively. "I was here, and the fat man there, and the gentleman wi' the umbrella up was at the far side. An' I never heard sich music. I don't expec' I'll ever hear music like it again."

As he related marvellous experiences of this kind he was wont to respire heavily through the mouth, and the guest would then have the unique opportunity of seeing his host's moustache spread out, fanwise, in spasmodic time.

The family had formed the habit of making Rothesay their holiday destination. The parents had gone there in their first year of married life and had never gone anywhere else since. At the inception of this habit they had occupied furnished apartments in Montague Street but had ultimately discontinued them because, as the mother would explain in a shocked aside, she had discovered bugs in the bed. The bugs even had the temerity to attack her own person, and this was outrage sufficient to make Montague Street excommunicate for ever. They had then chosen a boarding-house in Battery Place—it was ‘awful nice,’ the offspring would assert. “You get a nawful nice view of the water.”

After the conclusion of the meal the girl would produce snapshots and albums, and would explain the identity of the persons photographed without flagging of enthusiasm. “That’s me—what a guy!” she would say, or, “Amn’t I a sight in that one! It was Jeanie Brodie took that one. She’s a right monkey.”

Sometimes the lady of the house would intervene with reminiscences of her native Rutherglen, and occasionally her husband



would say jocularly : " What d'you think o' that, now ? " and point to a paragraph in the previous evening's paper, but generally they disappeared after the clearing of the tea-things, and the young pair would be left alone.

Then the girl and John would speak of little unimportant things for a space, and he would tell her of his day's doings, and she would tell him about the affairs of the other girls in the shop. Sometimes she would become abstracted and stare thoughtfully into the fireplace, and he would wonder tenderly of what she was thinking. Her eyes would grow luminous in those moments and her lips smile perceptibly as though her thoughts, though they might be far away, were very pleasant. Once he asked what she was thinking of, and she admitted with reluctant bashfulness that it was of him. He had thereupon proposed marriage to her and they had become engaged.

In that half-way condition his mind grew bewildered by the complexities of existence. She had assumed a proprietary manner that, at first gratifying, had latterly the power to annoy. Her father and mother became more congenial, more reminiscent, and gradu-

ally—so gradually that the realization came in the nature of a shock—they adopted towards him a parental attitude so winning, so blandly decisive and so all-embracing, that it could be termed nothing else than domination.

The bride-to-be, while not relaxing any of the stringencies essential to his gradual absorption in the family, had lessened her caution in the little privacies that human wisdom—or experience—has ordered as necessary before the bridal night. She was not averse that he should see her combing her hair. On one occasion she allowed herself to be surprised coming from the bathroom less her blouse, her long thin arms and flat bosom appearing from the apertures in her chemise. And on a third visit he had been ushered in friendly fashion into the kitchen where the young lady was washing her feet.

These revelations had made him thoughtful. He decided that the human form is best veiled, and the reflection was not uninfluenced by a strain of prudery in his nature. He had studied the statues in the Art Gallery (furtively, and with a sense of shame, and when no one was looking) and admitted



half-grudgingly that they were beautiful. His own fiancée, what he had seen of her, had few of the physical attractions of Venus, or Diana, or the Oriental Slave, and the knowledge was damping, even with the secret admission that Jason and Apollo and Mars were equally superior to himself. Feeling guilty of treason, he had rebuked himself with the reminder that true beauty is in the soul. Yet he had wondered why his own bride-to-be could not be capable of a little reticence.

His senses were sharpened under the vague shadow of disquiet. He was given his tea more frequently in the kitchen—it was more homely, the mother explained—and his was the opportunity of seeing the dishes produced from the cupboard. The girl now attended to this matter of feeding him, it had become her exclusive province. And he saw her fingers lift his cup by the place where his lips would touch and place it on his saucer. He saw her rub her hand across her nose and commence cutting bread thereafter. He quelled the growing disloyalty that irked him. He was positive that she would alter all those little habits, for he was only twenty.

War broke out and he joined in a flush of patriotism. He knew three years of battle. In the fourth year, and in the two years following, his reason had risen outrageously from its accustomed mould. He did not become insane. He simply surpassed the normal and fitted into a realm of his own fashioning. There unaccustomed optimism was mingled with spasmodic penetration. The high flood-tide of that mental strain had abated, leaving him as he now was : sane, with an obsession.

When discharged he had found himself homeless. Two brothers were gone from him. One was in Gallipoli, one on Hill 60, and they would be there for ever. His widowed mother had not survived the death of the second.

His fiancée had received him with embarrassment, for the rumour of his ailment had gone before him. Their meeting was long, harassing, but illuminating. In the end she grew candid ; words were spoken, and he took to the roads. The matter was dismissed from his mind—to his initial surprise, without difficulty. He forgot her.

One vision now absorbed all his attention. He had been visited in hospital, he asserted,

by Sir William Wallace, who had commanded him—for the furtherance of perpetual peace and happiness—to obtain the representation of his country in the League of Nations. Peace and happiness had been fugitive delights for these twain.

Before him continually he saw a figure stretched high for the jeers and laughter of the enemy. As the anchorite in his ecstasy saw Christ upon the cross, so Grant saw the giant frame of Wallace bound beside the scaffold.

## II

Recollection of his love affair, as he watched Flora working at the sink, brought no regret. Instead, he knew relief for escaping what he would have regretted, and he found that a comparison between the two women was in Flora's favour.

Flora had faced the world alone. Some of her sayings had a tincture of wit. Most of them had a quality of wisdom, generally bitter. She possessed the grace of charity. Flora was young. The other one would now be thirty-six.

Looking at Flora, he felt that it would be a pleasant thing were her thirty-sixth birthday a cheerful event, not a grim

reminder to a face and form that had to depend on perennial freshness for existence. Everyone who received the gift of life was entitled to the gift of happiness. Let it be in this girl's case a gift ; hard won, but won.

"I'm going through for a read," he said, rising.

"Right," she replied in her sharp soldier-like fashion.

As she dried the dishes she thought happily about him. There never was a man so queer ; he was the funniest man in existence. Pausing, she studied her face in a small hanging mirror, a plate in one hand and the dish-cloth in the other. She smiled at her reflection. The daftest man ! And a right good sort, too. A kind of decent man.

She decided to remove the sequin covering from her hat—it was kind of vulgar. But she would wait so that he could see her do it. What books would he be reading ? If he came through with all Minnie's paperbacks and chucked them in the baikie ! He would do that in a minute. Of course he would. Ah, if he only knew how much she liked him ! And she returned to her task in the most buoyant spirit.

After tidying the kitchen, she settled down



to read the newspaper. He would be pleased to see her so sedate when he chanced to come through. She would then be revealing a studious side of her character which he might not have suspected her of possessing, and of the possession of which she herself was a little doubtful.

She read the woman's page, the fashion notes, the film column, the theatrical gossip, the editorial leader on the Indian problem, the latest reports of the French floods, the condition of the Hungarian woman who had given birth to five children, and was becoming a trifle bored when she heard his footsteps, followed by the slamming of the outer door.

Foreboding seized her. She rushed to the door and was about to open it, but hesitated, trembling. Where was he going, she thought, and laughed tremulously. Surely the man could go out if he wanted to! She could not expect him to remain in the house all day, could she? And she did not expect him to ask her permission, did she?

With every apprehension possible stabbing at her heart she ran to the room window and opened it, leaning out in time to see him turn the corner. In his left hand he carried his coat, and in his right her portable gramophone.

## III

Grant returned to the house at half-past five. Before the sound of his knock had faded the door was opened.

"It's you," she said.

"It's me." He entered and placed the gramophone in its accustomed position before going to the kitchen. The table was set for tea, but the girl whisked a cup, saucer, and plate from the cupboard. "It's warm outside."

"Why did you take your coat, then?"

"It was to lay the gramophone on."

She stared at him. "Was that what you were doing?" She laughed quietly.

"You're not blate."

"It's a good idea," he responded mildly. "I took the machine round the back greens. I've made quite a lot." He extracted a pocketful of money, mostly coppers, and counted it with care. "There's four and eleven ha'penny here. That works out pretty well in the week. Take it."

Regarding the money with satisfaction, he sat down and explained that he had worked on a system, endeavouring to discover which kind of music appealed most to the popular taste. He thought that jazz was an attrac-



tion. The girl listened with the smiling tolerance accorded to a wayward child, or to one whose actions are too unexpected to require vindication or apology. But the money was sufficient evidence of his story, and she placed it in a purse.

Grant looked around him with a sensation of comfort. It was pleasant to have some place to go to after the day's exertions. It was restful. He reflected, also, that hearing the same records continually had become boring, however pleasing to the public; some of the tunes were still dirling through his head. But the fact of having a roof above that head was eminently soothing.

The girl had returned to her duties, and although he watched her, it was vaguely, for his thoughts concentrated more on the amenity of a house, however poor. With a start he discovered that she was speaking.

"You'll be ready for it."

"My tea?—yes. Flora. Why did you think I wouldn't be back?"

"Did I say that?" she questioned, flushing. "I didn't say that."

He indicated the table. "I saw you."

"Well," she said awkwardly, and laughing a little, "I didn't think you would be back."

That's honest. Somehow . . . I don't know, but I thought you were away for good."

"But I didn't say good-bye before I left!"

"No. Well, I suppose that should have told me. But," she added artlessly, "when I looked over the window——"

"So you looked over the window?"

"Yes—to wave to you," she said lamely.

"That was all."

"But you would see I had the gramophone!"

"If you want to know," said Flora desperately, and driven to the resolution of candour by his obstinacy, "I thought you'd slipped yourself for good and that you were taking my gramophone to see what you could raise on it. That's what."

"Oh, is that it?" he said after a stare and a thought.

"Yes, is it." She commenced to cut bread.

"Do you know," he exclaimed as though the vessel of a sudden revelation, "you're a pathetic wee soul when I think of you."

"Am I?" she said, without resentment.

"I'm poor—and honest."

"That doesn't pay."

"Some of the greatest figures in the world's history have been poor and honest, Flora."

"Well, I'm poor and I'm not one of them. And neither are you. I'd like to be rich, though maybe I'm not dishonest enough for that. The tea's infused."

Grant placed chairs. "I can eat with a better conscience."

"Four and elevenpence ha'penny! All right, go your pound. I'll bet you enjoy that tea," she boasted. "I can make rattling good tea . . . always add a spoonful for the teapot. Some women make tea that's pure dish-water. But this here is *tea*."

"I like the way you set a table. You do things nicely. Your hands are very clean, too."

"You don't miss much; do you?"

"And you eat your food decently."

Flora, chin tilted, pink with pleasure and suspicion, glanced at him from the corners of her eyes. "Slap it on with a spade," she suggested. "Here!—stick that in your tattietrap . . . it'll keep you quieter. At this rate you'll soon be getting fresh." Complacently she passed him the jam. "Eat up," she encouraged him.

Grant was enjoying the novel delights of company. "I can't eat more than I've earned . . . and I'm in arrears. I ought to buy a new record."

"Buy a collar and tie," was her worldly suggestion. "I like to see men wearing smart things. Except spats."

"I'm going out this evening."

"Are we?" she made quick to reply.

"Alone."

"All right," she said submissively.

Later he prepared to go out, but without indicating where he might be going. At the door he turned. "What will you be doing while I'm away?"

"Don't know," she answered without looking at him.

"You could have a read, maybe," he suggested.

"Maybe," she said sulkily.

Turning into Argyle Street, he walked westward. The evening was of calm sunlight, and the long street was cheerful with summer mood. At the gusset, where there is the cumulative ensemble of University and Galleries and terrace-topped hill in their setting of tree and lawn, he paused, and thought of past summer days there, and his

Sunday walks and Sunday clothes. Sorrow for the passing of all that is earthly, pity for the ambitions of man, was in his heart. His eyes brooded with the pain of remembered happenings. The people passing took him for a tramp.

"As I am!" he would have answered, probably. And only the tilt of his chin could have given him the lie.

He stood there, where several streets and several modes of existence meet. Many people passed him—to what ends of triumph or mortification? he thought ironically. Heed not the stars in their courses, he adjured them, for the stars in their courses heed not you.

Bitterness held him at so much apparent happiness, such easy familiarity with that mystery called life. "Am I unfinished," he wondered sadly, "that I have left the groove? That golfer—that man with his girl—if I had shaped for the inevitable like them! Here am I, in rags. They have their friends. They all have their friends . . . and mine is a dead man."

The chimes of the University startled him, and he commenced walking, in some measure retracing his route. He reached a school



in a back street where were grouped several knots of people. Other people were passing through the gates. Leaflets were handed to him, and he crossed the playground into the building.

Upstairs a large room had been temporarily improvised by the removal of a sliding partition. The benches were crammed with adults who appeared to have some difficulty in adapting themselves to seats designed for children. This was the cause of mirth, and everyone was in excellent humour. Most of those present bore the certain marks of poverty, which contrasted oddly with their present good spirits. Grant shared a seat with a middle-aged man who greeted him as an old friend. "We're dunces," said he with a hoarse chuckle. "We're at the fit o' the cless. See!"

Grant suggested that the view was unobstructed. "We didn't always get that when we were at school."

"I was never anywhere else when I was a wean," his companion admitted candidly.

The assembly grew impatient and a fat gentleman entered. He explained the aims of his party in three sentences, adding a fourth to the effect that Lord Quincey would

arrive any moment. Almost immediately a slim young man entered, attended by others.

"Good morning, boys and girls," cried someone from the rear seats.

One of the gentlemen who had accompanied him introduced Lord Quincey to all present. Making some graceful references to the candidate's interest in local affairs, and more particularly to such as affected the parliamentary division of Nether Overtoun, the youthful lord's enthusiasm for the shipping industry was emphasized. Were he returned to parliament a revival in that trade might be expected. Several lessons had been learned since the war, and the first thing that Lord Quincey would doubtless begin with would be——

"The Lord's Prayer," came from the rear.

Lord Quincey commenced with uneasiness and with an accent which was unfamiliar to his audience. He knew that this district of the constituency he was wooing was frankly inimical to him.

Nether Overtoun overlapped on all sides of the Kelvingrove Park and therefore held a varied assortment of classes. Neither the very rich nor the very poor returned the member. That choice lay with the inhabi-

tants of the tenement streets that fringed the park, and they knew their minds. At the last election Sir Rupert Barastor had romped home with a two-thousand majority.

Ex-Bailie James McGuffie, Secretary of the Barrow-menders, Horse Tail Bobbers and Ice Cream Vendors Union, nourished ambition in his Socialist bosom with an eye for the scattered Liberal vote. And now that Sir Rupert had passed from all political cares Mr. McGuffie, who had been ignominiously routed at the last election, hoped for better things. In place of the dead baronet's substantial qualities were the young lord's rank, good looks, and charm. Mr. McGuffie was scornful of them.

In the northerly parts of the constituency Lord Quincey had been received with purring admiration. Middle-aged ladies had thought him such a nice young man and young girls had concocted secret romances about him. In the district politically uncertain he had been greeted with calm approval. But here, in this street so near to the docks, to grime and squalor, he knew that he was facing sheer hostility. Sir Rupert Barastor had latterly ignored this quarter. He had nothing to hope from it, and he treated it

with whitely furious contempt. But Lord Quincey had courage, a sense of duty, and illusions.

"My friends," he said, "I'm delighted to come among you to-night, knowing that I'll get a fair and attentive hearing. I know Glasgow well. I've often been in Glasgow. And I know that if I get a good hearing in Glasgow anywhere it will be in this room."

"Hear, hear."

"I've been asked to contest this constituency in the Conservative interest owing to the death of Sir Rupert Barastor, who served Nether Overtoun faithfully for so many years."

"Who was Sir Rupert Bannister?"

"Why," said the candidate, turning with some surprise to a menacing-looking woman in the third row, "he was your member."

"Was 'e? Well, we never seen 'im."

"But," continued Lord Quincey, "Sir Rupert is dead——"

"Loud laughter."

"—And I have been asked to stand in his place. We all know," he continued, embracing his audience with a nervous gesture, "that we are passing through times of

great stress. Unemployment is rife, trade is slack, and—eh—money is difficult to get.” He smiled ingratiatingly upon the faces that had become stony so suddenly. “What is the panacea?”

“What’s what?” a pale creature of the candidate’s own age asked suspiciously.

“What is the cure?”

“A revolution,” was the immediate answer.

Lord Quincey smiled disarmingly.

“Oh!” he said.

In the back row sat six youths, this length in silence. On their faces were set masks of sardonic envy. They watched Lord Quincey with vulturine eyes. They had assessed his clothes, his inner sense of superiority and his present sense of discomfort in a repugnant environment. His accent also they had marked, and at Lord Quincey’s ejaculation one of them opened his mouth and drawled: “Ow!”

When the laughter had died Lord Quincey resumed his address. He said laughingly: “None of us, I dare say, is quite as blood-thirsty as this gentleman——”

“I’m no’ a gentleman,” the pale creature interrupted testily.

“You are all ladies and gentlemen to



me," said Lord Quincey, and scored a hit.  
"What else could I call you?"

"You can call me a b—— bolshevik," said the other truculently.

The candidate was being disordered in his stride. It is one thing delivering an address and quite another delivering an interrupted address. He studied his tormentor dumbly for a second and said: "Oh—Russia!"

"Ow, Rushya!" came from the rear.

"Russia," continued Lord Quincey hurriedly, "is not at all the sort of place that I would like the people of this country to imitate. We all know of the conditions there. We know the physical, spiritual, and moral horrors of that miserable country. No father of a family in this room," he added, warming up, "would choose to live in Russia of to-day—for his daughters' sakes."

"How no'?" demanded the father of a family.

"Russia," said the candidate impressively, "is the home of companionate marriage, of free love, of complete indifference to all moral laws."

"How d'ye mean?" asked the father irritably.

"In Russia, in that land of Russia, men have wives without marrying them," the candidate explained, and blushed to the roots of his hair.

The pale young man retorted coldly: "You and your like have that as well. Only you rich blokes call them garrottes."

"It's fine tae hae plenty o' money," added a little man placidly.

"Have *you* an unmarried wife?" the menacing-looking woman demanded. Lord Quincey indignantly said that he hadn't. "Ah well, ye're a leear," she said resignedly. "I don't read the Sunday papers for nae-thing."

"Tell me the name of the Sunday paper that says that about me," Lord Quincey cried hotly.

"It doesnae say that aboot you specially," she explained, adjusting the comb in her hair and scratching her scalp with her fingernails, "but it says that aboot the likes o' you."

"Then it's a vile, slanderous rag."

"Ow!"

"I am sorry if anyone here should put faith in the yellow press."

"Ow!"

“And I ask,” added Lord Quincey contemptuously, “you to treat such stories with indifference.”

“Owww !”

“The eyes of Great Britain,” the candidate continued, “are upon Nether Overtoun. You will be asked to make a decision that may have historic repercussions. It is in your hands—the decision whether you will return a member whose views are Russian and revolutionary and extremist, or one who believes in moderation, encouragement of trade, assistance to the unemployed, housing reform, better educational facilities, international peace, and the continued existence and prosperity of the British Empire.”

“Heah, heah !”

“What,” pursued Lord Quincey, “are the words of our glorious national bard——”

“‘You see yon birkie ca’d a lord,  
Wha struts and stares and a’ that,’”

said the pale young man, and smiled mordantly.

“Listen,” a young woman in her twenties said pertly, “what does M-A-C-L-E-O-D spell ?”

“MacLeod,” responded the candidate

good-humouredly, and with a hopeful eye on the female vote.

"And M-A-C-L-E-A-N—what does that spell ?"

"I should say MacLean," he replied smilingly.

"And M-A-C-H-I-N-E—what's that ?"

"MacHine," answered the unsuspecting young man, and his audience was convulsed.

"Do you," demanded a belligerent individual, rising and pointing a skinny finger at Lord Quincey, "does the candidate believe——"

"One moment, sir," interposed the gentleman who had introduced the candidate. "Lord Quincey is giving his address meantime. Your turn to ask questions will come later."

"Are you a Briton ?" the belligerent person demanded resentfully.

"Him ?—naw !" cried the menacing-looking woman shrilly. "That's auld MacFaulan the factor . . . the auld shilpit deil."

Mr. MacFarlane turned an embarrassed glance from one to the other. "Yes, I'm a Briton."

"Then d'ye believe in free speech ?"

“Certainly, but——”

“Then whit fur can I no’ get pitten a word in sideways?”

“You must first hear the candidate.”

“There’s nae must about it.”

“Hear, hear.”

“The candidate! The candidate!” they shouted. “Whaur’s the duke?” “Let him tell’s anither wee story.” “Come on, lord.”

“I certainly can speak,” said the candidate, “if I can get a chance.”

“Never you mind them,” said the father of a family consolingly. “Tell us mair about Russia.”

The pale young man had fixed a calculating gaze upon the candidate. His lanthorn jaws worked into prominence under the progress of his thoughts. Now he pounded the desk before him with his fist and shouted: “This man who calls himself the lord has got to answer questions at any time. We’re the electors of this division. It’s us that decides.”

“No, no——” Mr. MacFarlane commenced soothingly.

“Aw, shut up, you!”

“Give it a drink.”



"Shove your heid under the spiket."

"Awa' and——" but this last was ribald.

Mr. MacFarlane tactfully was silent, and Lord Quincey raised a protesting hand. The young man had lost his nervousness and found himself surprisingly cool. He now burned to convince these people, to make them vote for him, to make them cheer him. He now hated them with a venomous hate.

"I have tried to tell you my party's beliefs and intentions," he said calmly. "I am not here to make false promises, to bribe you with the offer of sun, moon and stars, to lead you to expect impossibilities. I said that my programme consisted of increased trade, work for all——"

"Do *you* work?"

"I do."

"At what?"

"I manage land."

"Whose is it?"

"It is the property of a company."

The pale young man took a hurried glance at a folded newspaper on his knee and continued the attack. "Who are the shareholders?"

Lord Quincey thought it best to humour him. "I am one."

"And who's the other?"

"Another is Lord Tranent."

"Who's he?"

"A peer, I presume," replied the candidate wearily.

"Is he your faither?"

"He is."

"This," said the heckler fleeringly to the audience, "is a company they've formed atween them to dodge the death duties! They're that patriotic they'll no' pay their taxes."

"Is the candidate in favour of giving us a' shares in the company?"

"Tell us mair aboot Russia."

"Is the candidate in favour of putting false teeth in the mooth o' the Clyde?"

"Ow! Ow!"

"Is the candidate gaun tae gie us a look at his croun?"

"Hey, duke, duke! See's a fag!"

"What's the difference between a train comin' oot a tunnel and a wumman comin' oot o' church?"

"Gie the laddie a wee chance. He's near greetin'."

"Does the candidate go to the jiggin'?"

"How's your granny, wee fella?"

“Owww!”

“Here, lad, here! Good doggie! Quincey, Quincey, Quincey!”

“How long’s the candidate been on the dole?”

“When’s he gaun tae look for a job?”

“Has the candidate ever tried rollin’ up his shirt-sleeves?”

As the witticisms came to him with the rapidity of machine-gun fire Lord Quincey’s eyes grew despairing. “Is this sporting?” his lips motioned, but none heard. Someone at the back commenced whistling ‘Three Blind Mice,’ a clear piercing whistle that rose above the din. Lord Quincey could recall that tune for the remainder of his days.

Help came from a quarter unexpected. Grant rose from his bench and demanded silence.

“Here’s Lord Overcoat now,” a happy voice commented.

“I have a question to ask!” Grant shouted.

The wild look in his eyes calmed the audience to curiosity. Without offering time for further interruptions, he said: “I have come with a question from a dead man.

That man demands an answer, and I demand it for him. You," he said, turning to Lord Quincey, "seem a young unlikely man to my eyes, but I may be prejudiced. Have you heard of the League of Nations?"

"I think so," said Lord Quincey icily.

"You have. Do you believe in it?"

"I certainly do."

"Do you believe that every country is entitled to a seat in the League?"

Lord Quincey said that he did.

"Will you, if you are elected, do all in your power to obtain Scotland a seat in the League?"

"That's quite unnecessary," said Lord Quincey shortly. "She is already represented."

"Will you endeavour?"

"That is not practical politics. Great Britain is represented. That covers everything."

"Then, young man, we have no use for you."

"Heah, heah."

"The demand of one sane man," Grant proceeded, "is equal——"

Finding nothing of interest in Grant's question, the audience grew impatient. They

shouted abuse at Mr. MacFarlane, and latterly at the candidate, and Grant sat down, fretting. He was beginning to experience some of Lord Quincey's impotency. At length he said furiously: "I'm going."

"Aye," said his neighbour sympathetically, "they're no' shut yet."

#### IV

On reaching Argyle Street he glanced at a jeweller's shop. It was fifteen minutes to eight. Grant quickened his pace and crossed Kelvingrove Park, coming ultimately to another school.

A different type of working people sat waiting to be convinced. They belonged to the class into which he himself had been born; which does not know hunger, which is used to baths, which can aspire to the clerical and medical professions. The rigid Liberalism of these people had latterly been diverted for the benefit of the deceased Sir Rupert Barastor. Had they lived in other parts of the city it might have tended to Socialism, but the West end unconsciously influenced them. They profoundly distrusted the creed of Marx.

The Secretary of the Barrow-menders,



Horse Tail Bobbers and Ice Cream Vendors Union shortly made a genial appearance. His first word was "Comrades," but sensing an unspoken hostility to that jaunty greeting, he added a hasty "and other friends."

Mr. McGuffie was quite bald and red-faced and domesticated. His features possessed the harmless pugnacity of the pug-dog, and this canine resemblance was stressed by the lineaments of one of his supporters, which bore the devoted and somewhat mournful cast of a spaniel.

His audience was not responsive, although he did occasionally receive a word of encouragement from a foppish young man in front. The spectacle of this immaculate person supporting a proletarian cause evoked comment among those present and threatened to put Mr. McGuffie out of focus. But if he possessed the looks of the pug, Mr. McGuffie knew many of the sterner qualities of the bulldog. He had not made his way from a 'single-end' in a mean street to a comfortable villa on nothing, and he brought all his wiles into play. His easy conquest of the district that had found Lord Quincey a subject for banter was not to be repeated here as easily, and the quick responsive-

ness, the grimly Latin temperament of the wretchedly poor was far divorced from the blank-faced speculation of those before him.

"I'm a working man—just like yourselves," he said.

"I'm not much of a speaker—I prefer deeds to words," he said.

"Mind you, if I'm returned, I'll see to the interests of the weans," he said.

A doubt thrilled those present as to whether they were working class. It sounded like an imputation. As for the weans—well, they were able to clothe and feed their own children, thank God!

"Think of Russia," said Mr. McGuffie. "A wonderful experiment. The greatest experiment in communal service ever made.

"Think of the slums," said Mr. McGuffie. "Labour will sweep all slums away.

"Just call me Jimmy," said Mr. McGuffie.

None of the audience was particularly enthusiastic about Russia. Russian tea or Russian cigarettes or Russian toffee—all very well; but Russia itself! One could spend eight days in Bruges or Ostend for about eight pounds, including excursions, lights, and gratuities—but Russia! The slums were where impertinent, verminous

people dwelt. And not one single person present would have called Mr. McGuffie 'Jimmy.'

Said Mr. McGuffie: "Every time a Conservative government is in power you tax yourselves."

Said Mr. McGuffie: "The Labour Party helps the independent man of small means."

Said Mr. McGuffie: "It is in your hands—the decision whether you will return a member whose views are Fascist and reactionary and extremist, or one who believes in moderation, encouragement of trade, assistance to the unemployed, housing reform, better educational facilities, slum clearances, international peace, and the continued existence and prosperity of the British Commonwealth of Nations."

"Hear, hear," said the foppish young man.

Mr. McGuffie spoke on. He pictured a new era. In that era there would be no unhappiness. And the culminating point of his argument was that the inauguration of that new era rested with the electors of Nether Overtoun. At the conclusion of his speech he awaited applause, which was not forthcoming, and then questions were invited.

"What does the candidate think," in-

quired a peering, mincing-mouthed old man, "of the Russian marriage laws?"

"I expect," replied Mr. McGuffie jocularly, "that, just the same as here, the wife will wear the breeks."

"That's no answer," the old man snapped. "No answer," he repeated fretfully, and relapsed into gloomy silence.

"Does the candidate not think," said a middle-aged ill-favoured woman, "that the promiscuous sex relationships permissible in Russia are a disgrace to any country?"

"These stories are merely hearsay and propaganda," replied Mr. McGuffie cautiously. "Such a state of affairs would be unnatural. I'm a married man myself—with seven children."

"Hear, hear," interjected the foppish young man, and fell from his seat to the floor. He was assisted out and resumed his orthodox political views in the small hours of the morning.

"Is the candidate in favour of the League of Nations?"

"Yes, I am."

"Is the candidate in favour of all nations being represented in the League?"

"I am."

“Is the candidate in favour of Scotland being represented in the League?”

“Certainly so.”

“As a separate entity?”

“By all means.”

“Then, sir,” said Grant, “you’d have my vote—that is, if I had one.”

As he left the room, followed by the amused titters of the constituents and the annoyed stare of ex-Bailie James McGuffie, he thought: “Here is one man who is single-souled and single-hearted. This man is finely fibred in spite of his coarse exterior. He is a patriot. He sees the light. He hears a call. And it is not the call of Westminster that he hears. It is the call of Stirling Bridge.”

“Where are you going to look for a job?” Flora asked him comradely at supper-time. She had prepared two slices of toasted bread and cheese, with tea, and there were fancy biscuits should his appetite and digestion go that length.

She protested vigorously when she understood that he proposed to abide by the gramophone. “Smiling and cadging—you’ll get sick of that. It means taking favours



chucked at you by other people, and scattering when the cops tell you to scat. It's—it's detestable."

"I can't take regular work," he said briefly. "I've got a great deal to do."

She was curious to know, but a sense of politeness restrained her, for she guessed that Grant was a man who had secrets of his own. She was already hurt by one example of his reticence. Voluntarily he related the events of the evening, his questions to Lord Quincey and ex-Bailie James McGuffie.

"And what has it all got to do with you?" she asked when he was silent, and gazed at him with a little quiver of apprehension. "Why should all those big bugs make you so . . . so excited?"

"Big bugs! One is a young ass and the other is a common-looking man—but his soul is golden. We shouldn't judge appearances."

"We should not," she said sincerely.

"It's like this, Flora," he said in explanatory fashion, leaning forward. "It's like this—that was good toasted cheese—I'm going to address meetings. I intend to support Mr. McGuffie. For it is quite evident that Mr. McGuffie will support me. It's a matter of principle," he observed gravely.

"And what good will it do?"

"It will make the like of you and me impossible."

"I—I like living," she said timidly.

"And you've never lived."

"We've got to take the good with the bad," she said obstinately.

"Yes, but we don't want to take nothing but the bad. Think of us! I am a vagrant, and you——"

"That's not fair," Flora whispered, white-lipped.

"Oh, it's fair."

"Don't need to be nasty; do you? There's no need to insult me; is there?"

"Flora, life's a fine thing." He stretched forth his hand and gripped hers and fixed her glance with his. "... For those who have the chance to live it. I went from overgrown boyhood to war and then to vagabondage. And you went from overgrown girlhood to what?"

"Flora, I want a world without squalor. I want to see an end of beastly wars and wretched slums and nameless sins. I want to see human beings as beautiful as the trees and flowers. Surely the Creator of plants was the Creator of us! If everyone could

be happy! If there were no more wars, no more folly! . . .”

“But,” she said in perplexity, “these are daft ideas. I thought you were a tramp!”

He released her hand quickly, and she knew she had offended. The thought grieved her. Casting around for a means to please him, she suggested timidly that they could go to a cinema on the following evening; she had money.

“To-morrow evening I’m going to deliver an address. I’m going to speak in public. I’m going to support Mr. McGuffie.”

“Oh, damn Mr. McGuffie!” she cried with sudden and uncontrollable irritation. “A fat lot Mr. McGuffie cares for you. And a fat lot you care for me.”

“Did I promise to care for you?” he asked gravely.

“No, you didn’t. But you might pity my loneliness.”

“I pity you, but not your loneliness.”

She stared at him with kindling exasperation. She was seized by a great desire to throw something at him, but on observing his intent surprise her mood calmed. “All right, have it your own way,” she said with an effort.

"I always get my own way."

A ready retort was on her tongue, but she checked it. She said instead: "You're the sort that doesn't take things for nothing, aren't you? Well—look!—I bought these for you to-day." She indicated a neat little pile on the bed: shirt, socks, and underwear. Her mood of anger passed. "For you," she said, and smiled infectiously.

Grant rose and examined them with care. "That was very thoughtful."

"Go to Freuchie! Leave off that shirt to-night. I'll steep it in some washing-powder . . . could do with some creosote too, maybe. Go to your meeting, and I hope it chokes you. But you're not going to meetings every night. No—especially if you're arrested the first night. And see here! you see that McGuffie gives you a half-decent backhander; you get something on account.

"Do you know," she added abruptly, "I think we should get another house. In a better quarter." He was gladdened by the unprompted suggestion, and said so. "Yes," she said, "even if it was a single room."

Grant was garrulous over his evening. Things were reaching fruition, he told the bored girl. He had found the man. He had

found Mr. McGuffie. In his mind's eye he saw the first proud Caledonian delegation making its way to Geneva via Calais and Paris.

The thought afforded him the utmost satisfaction, and so did contemplation of his new underwear. He handled a necktie with mingled amusement and doubt. So long since!—and he thought of Flora with fraternal tenderness.

Flora by that time was lying in bed. She wondered if she was ageing.

## V

Seen from the bridge that leads to Gibson Street the city was suffused in golden light. The high tower of the University quivered, purple velvet, in the myriad particles of the sun's rays. Beneath, the river entered on its last sylvan stretch before mingling with the waters of one that is greater. The air was cool, scented; the trees heavy with foliage; and for a space there was calm around.

Soon came a tram-car rattling down the slope; a newsboy's voice shouted a special edition. The chimes of the University warned the hour of nine.



Lord Quincey, smiling from the warmth of his reception, paced slowly across the playground, genially acknowledging his welcome the while. On the street his limousine landaulette closed the vista of a human hedge, a throng of patient people anxious to know how a lord looked. And farther away, had he noticed it, was a knot of people surrounding someone who had something to say.

Lord Quincey shook several hands, admired a baby, and signed an autograph book. "Keep the old flag flying," he said. Then he said: "Roll up on the day of the poll." Later he said: "I know that Nether Overtoun won't let me down. Thanks very much, everyone. You're all simply marvelous."

As his car glided past the corner Lord Quincey heard a loud commanding "O people!" He glanced across with lazy curiosity.

"Why!" he ejaculated, "is that not yon queer fellow who was wanting—what was he wanting?"

"I think he was wanting some facts concerning the Marriage Act," Mr. MacFarlane ventured deferentially.

“What for, I wonder? An awful lot of people with queer ideas are roving about. And they’re not all parliamentary candidates,” added his lordship profoundly.

Having realized their ambition to see a lord and having dissipated the greater part of the evening, those who had listened to the candidate were inclined to conclude it by listening to Grant. They concluded that he was a Socialist.

He looked like one. But having supped their fill of Lord Quincey, they had no disinclination to be fair. They were willing to extend every possible consideration to every possible postulated creed, and they would listen. That they would be influenced was another matter.

Lord Quincey had imbued them with delicious discontent. Some people were inordinately fortunate, and the prospect of large landed possessions and an earldom gave the young Conservative candidate a start in life, an air and an aura, which were enviable. Yet they did not envy Lord Quincey. Rather did they admire him. That one so richly endowed should forsake the shaded paths of leisure for the fierce light of public life redounded to his credit,

They could understand Mr. McGuffie and to some extent admire him also. He had won to a certain eminence among his own kind by rough eloquence, bigoted fervour, and a probable indifference to the feelings of others. There was nothing of the Robespierre about Mr. McGuffie, nor of Marat. But he might possess the qualities of a fourth-rate Danton. The electors, fond of reading picturesque historical fiction, knew their Jacobins. Recent political events had led to an association of ideas connecting Paris of the Terror with Glasgow of the Clyde Group. Certain enthusiasts had prophesied trouble, and certain romantics had found a swooning intoxication in the thought.

The gaunt man in their midst therefore offered a subject for fascinating speculation. He had as yet said nothing of note. Three times he had spoken the phrase 'O people' much as a sansculotte would have spoken to attract the passers-by in Saint Antoine. There was a certain pleasure in standing round the man and not feeling afraid. Who knew what he might say! It might be treason, sedition, sacrilege, or blasphemy. He might be a disciple of Mr. Marx or Mr.

Lenin, or Mr. Mussolini or Mr. Gandhi—or anything, indeed, except a supporter of Lord Quincey. He was not wearing a collar.

They listened attentively when the orator began to speak. He spoke of creation. Earth, he said, was the work of a Supreme Master, but that Master had determined that the inhabitants thereof must work out their own destinies. Therefore they had been given a responsibility and they owed one. Man, by developed thinking power, was no longer on the level of the beasts. He had acquired invention, conscience, and anticipation. In some cases he had made of himself a demi-god, and in many instances a fool.

As an ultimate question to the work of the centuries the only one conceivable was, "Where is happiness?" and the answer would be the only possible judgment upon the acts of man. In every work of man lurked the acid of inevitable truth. History had been taught by it, and retaught, and taught once more; yet as each false sham was levelled in the dust a falser one replaced it.

Down the centuries the groans of humanity had echoed with its tread. Its histories had

been carved on its own bones and inked in with its own blood. The ghosts of Roman legions marched into the uttermost confines of Europe, fainter, until they passed from sight, and in their wake passed the spectral hordes of Huns, of Goths, of Vandals, and of Moors. They had come, they had gone, and the horrors of yesterday were the glories of to-day. Man had suffered and endured. Many things had he endured for the fulfilment of one desire, and as he had stretched forth eagerly for that, that happiness had flitted from his ken. O fond elusion! Happiness before all, and above all.

“ ‘And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying . . .

“ ‘The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost . . .

“ ‘I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.



“ ‘ Therefore, saith the Lord God ; behold I, even I, will judge between the fat cattle and the lean cattle . . .

“ ‘ Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey.

“ ‘ And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land ; and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness . . .

“ ‘ . . . And I shall cause the shower to come down in his season ; there shall be showers of blessing.

“ ‘ And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hands of those that served themselves of them.

“ ‘ And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God.’

“ O people,” cried the orator, “ the Lord hath ordained that the nations of the earth be happy.”

Grant’s preamble was heard with respectful attention. The peculiar phrasing he assumed—the language of the prophets with

a reminiscence of Old Moore's Almanack—convinced them that he was a revivalist, a belief not shaken by his historical survey, as they were familiar with the methods of modern sects that are concerned with immediate salvation and the number of the beast. They discovered a charm in his phraseology, especially as they had no idea of what he was talking about. The words of Ezekiel soothed them. Half-grudgingly they allowed that Grant possessed the gift of keeping his trick card up his sleeve.

Nurtured in the environment of a creed, which, whatever its faults, has the supreme merit of placing a man spiritually face-to-face with his Maker, they were tolerantly keen to hear the probably divergent views of someone else. Short of blasphemy they would listen to him. Consequently he surprised them by abruptly speaking of the League of Nations. Confused, they heard his laudation of that assembly; and amused, listened to a recital of the names of Yugoslavia, Lithuania, Esthonia, Latvia, and Czecho-Slovakia.

“Shall I confide to you my work? It is to gain Scotland a seat in the League of Nations. Shall I tell you from whom I

received the mandate? It was from Sir William Wallace."

"Who's he?"

"What!—Wallace! You've never heard of the champion of your country!"

"Oh, of course," said the interrupter, disconcerted. "But you said he *told* you."

"He did tell me," was the calm response. "He came to me in hospital and gave me his commands. I had read in a paper about the new European states and how they had regained their souls."

"And Wallace came to me and spoke to me. 'This is an extraordinary state of affairs,' he said. 'Why is my country not in the League of Nations?'"

"And I said unto him: 'Verily, I expect she will have no soul.'"

"And Wallace, speaking unto me, said: 'I doubt if she's the better without a soul. She ought to be in the League of Nations.' And I, speaking unto Wallace, said: 'Were she in the League of Nations assuredly she would have a soul.'"

"And it came to pass that the spirit of Wallace entered into me there and then, and when I spoke my voice spoke with the tongue of Wallace, and when I thought I

thought with the mind of Wallace, and when I looked I saw with the eyes of Wallace.

“And my soul descended to a great depth, and when it arose from that depth I was gifted with a mighty voice, and I cried, ‘O people!’

“O people,” he repeated, casting a terrific glance on his beholders, “O mad people, mad because ye heareth, yet heareth not.

“And O mad Scotland,” he added softly, “mad for that thou lovest us and we loveth not thee. It is not love to love and have no return. For that is madness.

“By the grey seas of the north dwells my love. There where the hills cleave deep the clouds that pass them; there dwells she.

“Tender are the eyes, the eyes of my love. Afar off she standeth, gazing with a wintry sunset in her eyes. Sorrow settles there, and anguish speaketh in the sadness of her glance.

“As a bird quivereth in the hand of his captor, so trembleth her heart. Cold and heavy in the mood of her misgivings, as a captured wild bird that feareth the captor. It beats fearfully to the music of her fears, and to the rhythm of her sorrows it beats a tune forlorn.

“The lips of my love awaiteth the lips

of love. As a maid that waiteth with glad expectation, so waiteth she. Lips of scarlet are the lips of my love, twin flames that shield the treasures of her teeth. But none come to the lips of my love.

“A voice of gold she hath, but she speaketh not. Nay, for what would she say? None but the fool speaketh when no man listens. None but the wise speaketh unto the wise.

“My love’s hair is as the waving trees on the hill-side. As a cloud of glory it is, and as a cloak of eternal protection. It floweth to the elements, all that it shadoweth are blessed before the world.

“Where are the ears and the mind of my love? She hears, and so she sorroweth; as she thinks, so does she mourn her sorrows. The sun passes over the cities and the fields; the moon succeeds as surrogate. And ever as the day dawns and the day dies, as the sun rises and as the sun sets, so must my love sorrow unceasingly; so must she weep deep tears of woe.

“Brighter than comfort, sweeter than mercy, fairer than pity; more bright and sweet and fair is she. How many things would she give to those that sought her! And yet none seek.



“Lovelier than the sun on peat-brown pools, kinder than the rain on parching fields, gentler than the finger of the sun on mountain-tops; lovelier and kinder and gentler is she.

“She bendeth softly to thy glance. Ye heed her not. Suavely she toucheth thee by the sleeve. And yet ye offer her no regard.

“All sorrow doth she put past her that she may be acceptable in thy sight. All sorrow doth she banish. She cometh to thee, smiling in the plenitude of her affection. Mild as a fawn doth she come, and radiant as a lamp of welcome. Ye goeth not to her and so she cometh forth.

“Beseechingly she stretches forth her arms, all forgiving in the store of her abundance. But ye heed her not!

“O people! To-night the stars are above us, the inlaid sky. To-morrow you or I may be stretched cold in her inevitable clasp. Go not to those everlasting arms without love, without service. To-night the opportunity is here; to-morrow it may flee thee.

“In that straight bed all hopes are gone. Think, ere thought passes before the dawn can overtake it. And act, ere the hand that

promises action crumbles in the embrace of she whom it failed to serve. O people!"

Lowering his arm of warning, Grant was silent, and for a space of time he and his now large audience stared mutually in calculation and surmise.

In amazement had they heard him. None other had they heard like him. Without inkling of the passionate purpose that burned him as a flame and with small comprehension of his allegory, they suspected that they listened to someone unusual, someone undoubtedly fanatical, someone who was obviously mad. They knew that madness in the East is revered. Many clever people had been quite insane. This man must have a bee in his bonnet, but like Lord Lindsay's brother he had fine pyet words. They would hear him out.

Misunderstanding their silence and after a fit of coughing, Grant said: "No doubt you think I am a fool. That is to be expected and almost to be hoped for. Because when you realize your mistake you will support me to blot out the memory of your own misjudgment. You don't understand me, and I won't grieve at that if I think you're willing to understand."

“And what is it you want?”

“I have said that the greatest thing is happiness. The League of Nations is the germ of human brotherhood, human sanity. It is the portent of a new age. I ask men to love and serve their own country. If you love Scotland you will love the world. Love your countrymen and you will love your fellow-creatures.

“I have no use for political parties, but to-night I am making a plea. There are two candidates in Nether Overtoun, and I put a question to each. I want Scotland represented in the League. That is our right. Canada, Australia, South Africa—dominions we helped to create—have a seat there. Ireland, which England conquered, has a seat there. But unconquered Scotland has no say at Geneva.

“Lord Quincey treated my question with contempt. But Mr. McGuffie has entered whole-heartedly into the spirit of the crusade. Mr. McGuffie intends to push forward our rights with all his power. He inferred as much. I ask you, therefore, to support Mr. McGuffie at the poll.”

Grant felt the cold wave of cynicism that closed over him. Polite smiles greeted him,

and preparations for departure. A voice asked if he was a paid speaker. He shouted indignant denial. "Has a man no right to air his beliefs?"

"Maybe, maybe," he was answered soothingly. "But it would be better not to give them in such a roundabout fashion."

"If Lord Quincey had promised to do as I wanted I would have canvassed for him."

"You don't need to tell educated people the name of their candidate."

"No—nor sheep the name of the dog that rounds them."

The subtle irradiation from these people was hostile now, and regardless of their votes he turned on them with a snarl that slew any lingering sympathy he had evoked. "Fools!—and I'm a bigger fool to waste my words on you. Go back to your forms, and live there, die there, without thought, without hope. Sleep, and eat, and gorge yourselves.

"Humanity marches to happiness. The strong within the ranks are strengthened by the ardours of the route. As they march to greater obstacles those they faced at the start seem dwarfish, and the recollection of triumph heartens them for the looming hazards. Cleansed, purified, a god-like race shall rise,

and the Master of Earth will smile. The weak will fall out from the ranks and the low-souled find no joy in the goal. They will fall by the roadside, and the race shall pass them by. Far before them, they will hear the triumphant tread, till the last shape fades away and the last echo dies.

“Perish by the roadside and make room for the nations of the earth. Sleep and slumber. Let the mists cover she that loved thee, and that thou rejected ; let them cover the land for evermore. Let the Judge say : ‘ So perish this nation.’ Let England avert her head and say : ‘ Farewell.’ ”

Quivering with the intensity of his feelings, sickened by the conception of his own images, the orator stopped and tried to dash the mists from his eyes. He had forgotten his audience, and when he could see clearly it was to find the audience gone. None remained but a little boy who stared at the orator with open-mouthed wonder.

A sardonic smile crept to his lips. “ ‘ What aileth thee now,’ ” he murmured, “ ‘ that thou art wholly gone up to the house-tops ? ”

“ ‘ Thou that art full of stirs, a tumultuous city, a joyous city : thy slain men



are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle.' ”

Darkness had fallen. Slowly he walked away, overcome with dejection, and caring for quiet above all else. Passing up the incline that leads to the Free Church College, he paused, gazing at the corresponding descent and the long line of twinkling lights that betokened a distant street. Around him was silence profound, and a fresh wind cooled his cheek.

Some thought invigorated him ; his back straightened and lightly he ran down the flight of steps, walking with a swinging stride.

One had listened that evening whose presence would have surprised him. She had followed him, cautiously and at a distance, and full of shamed suspicion, and finally with her misgivings allayed had taken an unobserved stance at the rear of the crowd to hear him. Not choosing to wait for the finish—for had she not his supper to make ?—she returned trembling with pleasure, consternation, and surmise. Why should he speak about her in public ? she wondered.

## PART THREE

### I

THE most interesting event of the preceding spring had been the founding of the *Spear*. The *Spear* was, in the words of its chief proprietor, Sir Frederick Saltire (formerly Salter), a High-Class Morning Paper for the Business Man and Woman, the Home, and the Youth of Scotland.

Its initial number had been heralded by a month's flourish of trumpets in Sir Frederick's forty publications. Seven days had the *Spear* been prepared and seven days had its distribution been cancelled until Sir Frederick's exacting soul was satisfied and his commercial instincts appeased. Celtic type was used for the name heading—a master touch of Sir Angus MacKellar, Sir Frederick's fellow-director—and the space between 'The' and 'Spear' was ingeniously occupied by a Saint Andrew's cross, at once a compliment to its readers and its proprietor.

Sir Frederick had not prepared for the

conquest of hostile territory without qualms, but he had dismissed them latterly, only remarking that he was marching either to a Bannockburn or a Flodden. His arrangements were on a scale befitting his genius and vanity. No opportunity was lost to impress on potential readers the magnitude of the treat in store for them. The day of publication came and Sir Frederick assumed the mantle of Surrey.

Every morning the *Spear* was ready for every breakfast-table in every town in Scotland. It was in many of the hamlets and crofts as well. An aeroplane service carried the paper to remote districts whence fleet cars distributed it over the country-side like glad tidings or a plague. Nor were the islands of the west neglected; Mull, Islay, Jura, Skye—they got their morning *Spear*.

The simple crofter-fishermen of the Hebridean townships learned the latest reports from the Bourse, and their daughters in time knew as much, or more maybe, of the latest creations of Françoise and Jenny as they did of the condition of Do'l mor Fletcher's cow at Ballochandrain. This was circulation in the grand manner—to a thinly populated country, and the financial benefits

were doubtful. But the publicity value was immense.

“How is Archie’s Kirsty getting on in her new place?” would some mother in Mull inquire, writing to her daughter in service in Glasgow. “It must be fine you seeing her so often. You would be seeing that Murdo MacLean’s brother Baldy in Kilmarnock is dead. We saw it in the *Spear*.”

The *Spear* had something for everyone. That was the boast, and it was no idle boast.

A favourite child of the proprietor’s brain was the Highland Page. This had been deprecated by Sir Angus MacKellar, who saw no money in it, but Sir Frederick had prescience. It was under the nominal editorship of the bankrupt chief MacAllan of Dunallan, who bears the hereditary patronymic of MacAilein mhic Dhomnuill Riabhaich. One column devoted to the Gaelic language was conducted by Mr. Hector MacInnes (Eachann MacAonghais), for MacAilein mhic Dhomnuill Riabhaich unfortunately only spoke English and a little French.

A Great Free Competition was instituted in which those whose names began with Mac could enter, enclosing a coupon which guaranteed that they had ordered the *Spear* for six

months. The first three prizewinners received cheques for five, two, and one hundred pounds respectively. The somewhat unfortunate outcome of this scheme—for the lucky prizewinners were two Irishmen named Macnulty and Macnamara and an Englishman called Mackworth—did not daunt its promoters. The paper went from strength to strength.

It had a Page for the Children, and a Tiny Tots' Column. A Splendid Free Competition had signalized its inception with prizes of—sublime idea—living creatures! So the thoughtless little prizewinners and their equally thoughtless parents found themselves embarrassedly richer by Shetland ponies, Skye terriers, Maltese cavies, and piebald mice. Only the obscure recipients realized the impossibility of stabling a pony in a one-room-and-kitchen house, and the *Spear* advanced in triumph. Auntie Babs was the editress of this page.

'DEAR MARGARET (aged three),' she would write, 'I was so charmed to get your utterly lovely wee letter. Aren't Bongo and Hootchy and Giggilums very, very funny? And the Tiny Tiniest Bear? Read the *Spear*



every day and you will learn all about them. I am so glad you love your daddy and mummy. You dear little mite! I am sending you a *Spear* Extra-Special Big Goody Goody Box of Marzipan Potatoes.'

The Advice to Our Girls' page was the allotted sphere of Miss Cleopatra Joy Deverell, the celebrated novelist. Her concern was the disentangling of her readers' love affairs, and her counsel was much sought and cheerfully given.

'DEAR MISS DEVERELL, I am eighteen years of age, slim, golden-haired, with misty blue eyes, and my friends tell me I am pretty. I met an awfully nice boy at a dance four weeks ago. We danced all night and I was quite thrilled. He has crisp wavy hair, a whimsical smile, and lots of character, for he tells me he never wears anything but brown shoes. But the last time I met him I didn't get a thrill. Do you think I still love him? I am not sure, for I have met another nice boy who wants me to go to a dance. I am getting a new dance frock. Do you think mauve or beige georgette would suit my type of beauty most?—RUBY.'

‘DEAR RUBY,’ Miss Deverell would reply, ‘if you find that the young man is no longer in your thoughts you may be certain that he is merely a passing fancy. In due time the man of your heart will appear, and then you will know without uncertainty that he is your real mate. Your lucky number is nine, your fortunate month April, and your stone the garnet. I think you should choose the beige georgette. It should match your personality immensely.’

But perhaps the most successful contribution to the *Spear* was the Society Scintillations of the Marchioness of Hadahead, widow of the youthful peer whose neck was broken in the hunting-field. She compressed the joy and distinction of London, Paris, the Riviera, and the Adriatic into her paragraphs.

‘My dears,’ she would say, ‘I feel so blasé after the air journey that I can scarcely hold a pen, and have this moment actually begged Fauvette for a cocktail. Paris is so outré just now and the Hôtel Meurice is, believe me, full of quite, quite utterly unimportant people. Ennui, my dears!’

‘I saw only Prince Lucien of Bosange, Count Boris (Bozzy) Goladombrowski, Chicks

(this is the ex-King of Carinthia, my sweet-ests), and that utterly dearest creature, the Duchess of Mercia. She was telling me that Ducallieu Manor and the town house in Carlton House Terrace are closed meantime as the Duke (Taggles to his intimates) is boar-hunting in France with Vicomte de Raconzay, and she is going to Durazzo to rest after the too, *too* strenuous entertainments of the season. Poor dear.'

Nor was man forgotten in this agglomeration of attractions. Beau Nash gave useful hints on dress ; he instructed on how many buttons should be worn on the jacket sleeve, and in what shade should be the raglan. Under his tuition the choice of a bowler hat became a sacred ceremony, the curl of its brim a matter for inspired discrimination. Castor gave his fiat on athletics, and Veritas offered easy solutions on all political problems. A £20,000 Free Accident Insurance, provisional on a permanent subscription at the local stationer's, and a succession of Cross-Word Puzzles, Names of Towns Competitions, and Missing Words Conundrums (all with £5,000 Cash Prizes that must be won), helped to relieve the tedium of existence.

Controlling this newspaper like Jove controlling the thunder was Sir Frederick Saltaire, afar in London; Sir Frederick, who had refused a peerage that he might be singular from his fellow press magnates, and who flaunted his glittering collection of periodicals as a woman flaunts her diamonds. Millions daily absorbed his ideas and moulded themselves accordingly. Sir Frederick gave his readers the sweet watered milk of sensationalism. He could have given them the wine of sense, but he had no high idea of the average man's intelligence.

Three stars guided the *Spear* in its course. It was NON-SECTARIAN, it was INDEPENDENT, and it was TRENCHANT.

Sir Rupert Barastor having obligingly died, the *Spear* turned its attention to Nether Overtoun, pointing out that the German, French, and Soviet foreign ministers were awaiting the result of the poll with breathless anxiety. The career of Mr. James McGuffie was sketched in sympathetic fashion, but the Viscount Quincey offered more scope for picturesque treatment. It was recalled that four barons of his line had died in battle, three had been executed for high treason, and one had been assassinated in his bed.



Mary Queen of Scots had slept in Quincey Castle and planted an oak-tree there to which at a later date Oliver Cromwell had tethered his horse. There also were Queen Victoria's fir, the Prince Consort's larch, Dr. David Livingstone's ash, and a beech regarding which the caretaker displayed some diffidence, as he was never certain whether it had been planted by Paoli, Paganini, or Pagliacci.

Although the *Spear* set to convince its readers that Nether Overtoun was the centre of high political significance which might induce convulsions of economic, sociological, or even cosmic phenomena, the by-election did not reveal the dramatic qualities expected of it. The electors declined to consider themselves divine instruments closely watched by an inscrutable Providence. It was the holiday season.

"I wonder," remarked the editor of the *Spear* with petulance, "why those people are so phlegmatic about their election."

"I expect," said the assistant editor, "it's because Lord Quincey is a tin whistle and McGuffie a football rickety."

A young man was despatched to explore the potentialities of the constituency. He returned, wrote about the indifference of the



River Kelvin to politics and the silhouette of the Roberts Statue against a fiery sky, and was instantly discharged. Another young man was sent forth, and he, recollecting the fate of his predecessor, described a Quincey meeting and a McGuffie meeting with a wealth of picturesque detail.

"It's good," said the chief sub-editor mournfully, "but it's too damned Rabelaisian. This is a family newspaper."

The third young man had read extensively and he knew there was drama in poverty. He made at once for a poor quarter. After having a couple of drinks to gain local colour he turned a corner and saw a crowd. In the midst and speaking to it was a man. The evening was advanced, a blue haze enveloped the long, narrow, and drab street. At the far end of it the afterglow of sunset, bronze dusky fire, quivered with unearthly beauty.

That far corona, so distant from the mean canyon that it mocked, held a forlorn splendour, a vague promise or a vaguer denial, which impressed the young journalist. He compared it silently with the street, the collection of weary figures, the radiant face of the man who harangued them. The phantasmagoric flashes from the trams passing

on the main street, the liqueous shapes of light that distorted the windows of the tenements, the little low shops with their feeble gas-jets—they entered into his comprehension, hinted uneasily at the resurrected memory from another life.

The young man grew excited. He thought of the dim misty mornings and the dim dusky gloamings in which great history had been fashioned. That man in the midst of the crowd—he was speaking queer flashes of poetic phrase, quoting obscure passages from the Bible, indulging in wild allegory.

The young man listened enchanted.

“I say, mate,” said he, tapping the shoulder of a man beside him. He considered it tactful to be democratic in a democratic quarter. “I say, mate, who’s that bloke?”

“Do’ know.”

“Heard ’im afore?” pursued the reporter anxiously and in the patois.

“Naw.”

“He’s a —— good speaker, anyway.”

“Aye.”

The young man surrendered this line of investigation and determined to accost the speaker direct. In this he failed, for as the

meeting concluded he was momentarily interested in an argument between two women at the corner to discover that his quarry was gone.

On his way back he wondered if his unemployment book would remain in the *Spear's* possession or be in his own on the following day. The *Spear* rose to the occasion.

‘THE NAMELESS MAN.

WHO IS HE ?

INTRIGUING NETHER OVERTOUN

MYSTERY.

‘A Gilbertian touch has been added to the tense drama of the Nether Overtoun by-election by the intervention of a mysterious personality who threatens to eclipse both candidates. For some days a tall, gaunt, impressive man has delivered impassioned harangues in various parts of the constituency, and his identity has been freely guessed and widely discussed.

‘The *Spear* Special Investigator has made careful inquiries regarding the nameless orator and everything points to him being a man of culture, refinement, and evident intellect.

‘ We have strong reasons for believing that his self-imposed incognito is merely a mask for certain reasons—which at present we will not indicate—but without doubt when the moment comes and his real identity is divulged a wave of surprise will sweep over Glasgow, and the *Spear’s* prescience in this three-cornered contest—for such we term it advisedly—will be freely admitted.’

## II

Footsteps sounded closer, and someone with a nervous cough remarked on the beauty of the night.

Grant saw a young man with a pleasant smile and strong-lensed spectacles. He returned the greeting and would have allowed the stranger to pass on, but he showed no desire to do so, falling into pace instead.

“ I heard your speech just now,” he said. “ It was splendid.”

“ I am glad.”

“ You are revealing a new message.”

“ Yes,” said Grant, “ it is my own.”

“ It sounds,” said the other, “ full of truth and disinterestedness.”

The orator flushed with pleasure. “ Some won’t believe that,” he said.

The reporter proffered his cigarette-case. "My name is David Rattray," he said. He then bluntly asked several questions and was denied answers to none. Latterly he saturated himself in information, and finally demanded Grant's address. But that answer was evasive.

Mr. Rattray, who had successfully tracked his man down, was told the time and place of the next oration, and Grant slackened his pace as a hint of parting. They bade good night.

Immediately Grant was out of sight Mr. Rattray started in stealthy pursuit and by careful shadowing followed him to Flora's house. He noticed the number and street and retired, well pleased.

And the *Spear* said :

'As our readers are aware, a mysterious man has occupied the minds of Glasgow people since the by-election in Nether Overton first engrossed public attention. The remarkable oratorical powers and novel constructive ideas of the Nameless Man, as he is generally known, have impressed all who heard him, and the strict incognito under which he chose to mask himself added a piquant interest to his personality.



‘The *Spear* is now in a position to reveal the name of the mysterious man whose identity has for several days formed a subject for speculation as entrancing as that of the Man in the Iron Mask.

‘Behind his self-imposed reticence is the reason of one who has been disillusioned by the sorrows and cruelties of the world and in endeavouring to better them has preferred to conceal his own name. We may state, without betrayal of confidence and with his own approval, that he is a native of Glasgow, of which city he is intensely proud, and that he served throughout the Great War in a combative capacity. These four years of horror left an indelible mark upon his mind, and it is to bring a healing sympathy to others alike spiritually scarred that he has embarked upon his crusade.

‘Nameless no longer, the Nameless Man is Mr. John Grant, a native, as we have already stated, of Glasgow. This exclusive startling information is now given by the *Spear* with Mr. Grant’s own consent and approbation.

‘After the War, during which his record was a distinguished one, Mr. Grant preferred to choose a life of whimsical vagabondage

rather than return to the humdrum routine of city life, as that course enabled him to pursue the studies of oratory, Scripture, and natural history, subjects on which he is no mean authority.

‘In the course of an interview with our Special Political Correspondent, Mr. Grant stated that the present party system was not, in his opinion, conducive to the commonweal of the people. He advocates a large-minded treatment of public affairs and a more sympathetic mode of dealing with social problems.

‘This, it is needless to state, has been the course suggested by the *Spear* since its inception, and the remarkable fact that a public movement in favour of this method is growing so rapidly is in our opinion more than a coincidence.

‘Nether Overtoun, politically, is at the cross-roads. The effect of Mr. Grant’s national crusade will be watched by the *Spear’s* readers with sympathetic interest, and the next few days should be productive of sensational disclosures.’

Grant read the production—he had not seen the first one—with amazement, and passed the paper to Flora. Amazed, he was

pleased as well. He had hungered for publicity and he was getting it. Eyes fixed steadily on his food, he ate with heartiness, waiting for her surprised exclamation.

Not hearing it he glanced up, to see the angry flush on her brow, her discontented look. "So that's your name," she said.

"Yes, of course."

"You can tell it to other people," she said hotly, "but you can't tell it to me. I'm saying, you couldn't tell it to me; could you?"

"Why, Flora, I never thought! . . . you never asked me."

"You might have told me," she said pettishly. "Ask?—it wasn't my business. I've got manners. You might have told me your name, I'm thinking."

"Well, I'm dead sorry," he responded mildly. "I never thought."

Mollified, she returned to the *Spear* and finished reading the exclusive revelation. "It's great, when you think of it," she remarked softly.

"Surprised?"

"Uh-huh." She scrutinized him with sharp appreciation for a moment. "You must be very clever. And"—she turned a hurried

glance on the journal—"oratory, Scripture, natural history . . . you study all them?"

"Well, no," he said hesitatingly. "I don't know how that comes to be in print. I can't quite follow that bit."

"And you had a distinguished war service?" she demanded admiringly. "Did you get any medals—the V.C. or anything like that?"

"No, I didn't."

"And those things that you're—you're . . . what it says here—they're all your own ideas?"

"All mine," he admitted briefly.

"My, it's great," she commented with artless fervour.

Abashed by praise, Grant remained happily silent.

"And how is it," she pursued, "that you kept your—your incognito? What did you do that for? Why did you not tell them your name? Was it for the same reason that you didn't tell me?"

"My name had nothing to do with it."

"It must have," she insisted.

"My heavens," he cried blankly, "I didn't offer to tell my name, and no one ever asked me. I can't understand that about the Nameless Man. It's all nonsense."

"You must have told *someone* your name," she argued, "or it wouldn't be in the paper here."

"I told a young chap who came through the West-end park with me. He asked me a lot of questions, I remember, and I answered them. He was a very nice sort of chap."

"That's your man," she said with conviction. "He's been a reporter."

Grant meditated on this. "I dare say you're right"

"Don't tell those chaps too much," she advised shrewdly. "They can make mountains out of molehills."

"I can't refuse, can I, if they serve the cause?"

"I expect, like as not, they're keener to serve their papers. I like the name John Grant."

"Do you, Flora?" he asked boyishly.

She nodded emphatically, and then smiled shyly, from an irresistible impulse of confession. "I wondered what it was sometimes. Ach, I do' know. I thought . . . I thought it might be Walter something. Or maybe Gerard. Gerard's a nice name." Throwing back her head, she laughed. "You'll think I'm dolalli, won't you? Well, I'm glad I know your name. I was that



mad you didn't tell. I thought you were in a fit of the dourocks. You know, sometimes you just sit and say nothing, don't you? That right?"

"I dare say I'm thinking, Flora."

"I like to think out loud," she said frankly.

"I like to say things to people so that people can say things to me. It's friendly, like."

"Surely you think in silence sometimes!"

"Mphm." She gravely assented, with an affirmative side nod of the head. "Sometimes . . . deep things."

"And what deep things?" he asked, amused.

"Ah, g'on!" she cried with a quick change of tone. "I mean to say times . . . ah well, times like that." She suggested irrelevantly that he would be unable to take the gramophone out—now that he was famous. "That's five times you've had it out," she said with relish. "I wish I could get a job." Watching him stealthily, she said: "John."

The word, used last to him so many years before, almost startled him. He looked at her, and she was reassured.

"When you talk to those people about . . . about all the things this paper says, do you ever talk about any other things?"

"No ; why should I ? "

"I just wondered." Flora was half convinced and slightly disappointed. "I don't know. I wondered. Could I help you in any way ? "

"I don't think so ; thanks."

"Do you think that all this speaking," she said, spurred by a fresh thought, "will lead to anything ? " And she stared at him appealingly.

"I hope so, Flora."

"I mean, will you be going away soon, now that you're in the papers and all that ? Well, I hope not," she said candidly, adding with cynicism : "Now that you have a sister and I've got a brother. I never thought when we met last week that you'd be taking my gramophone for an airing, and that I'd be hanging your shirt on the pulley for an airing forbye. And I never thought you were famous and mixed up with M.P.s and all that. It just shows we never know who we meet in this world. God, it's great."

### III

*Vox populi, vox Dei.* The *Spear* was insistent on the truth of the saying.

It never failed to impress the flattering

belief upon its readers, even if some were not such as to presuppose a high standard of intelligence in their Creator.

The beliefs and creeds of the Man in the Street, the Modern Young Man, the House-keeper, were eagerly discovered, discussed, and elevated ; the personification was apotheosized.

Such embarrassing attention bewildered at first, for the mortals whose main interest was the immediacy of rent-day or the next instalment on the sewing-machine scarcely could credit the alleged high value of their views.

But the *Spear* assured its readers of their power, their voice. Its readers in time believed the pleasant assurance, in bulk resembling the puissant beings who led armies and ruled empires with a watchful counsellor in the background : Augustulus with his Orestes, Chilperic and Charles Martel.

The *Spear* set a proposition before them ; on the second day it had become a matter of moment ; on the third, a National Question. And the readers of the *Spear* accepted the National Question with grave alarm.

When the *Spear*, therefore, for want of anything better, splashed the name of John Grant across its pages, they were satisfied

that Mr. Grant was the Man Who Knew What He Wanted, and they were vaguely certain that they themselves for some time had wanted a man like Mr. Grant.

Mr. Grant Wanted Things To Be Done. That was Plain Talk. It was Straight From The Shoulder.

At first few bothered to go and hear the prophet. There was more comfort in reading about him, more so as he could be taken on trust. For he was Non-Political. The *Spear* said that he was. Mr. Grant himself said so. And the *Spear* did not care to add that although Mr. Grant was Non-Political, he was palpably canvassing the claims of ex-Bailie James McGuffie.

Had Mr. Grant been in favour of Lord Quincey, no difference would it have made. For the *Spear* also was Non-Political, and it circulated among a diverse clientele. So long as Mr. Grant's beliefs could be promulgated in vague generalizations, all was well. Once an inkling of his complete beliefs became general knowledge, Mr. Grant's stock might slump, but not more than the stock of the *Spear*.

Grant had entered the lists. A powerful herald had greeted him with a fanfare, and



one million minds were about to appraise him. But the herald on withdrawing the trumpet from his lips had known an instant doubt, an uneasiness. The unknown was about to fight. The doubt was not whether he could be trusted to do battle, but whether he might not fight too strongly. The herald, also, was in a false position, having adopted an attitude of partiality. More so, there lurked in the rear another herald, trumpet in hand; of such minor dimensions and circulation that the term of pursuivant or page was more appropriate. But of this menacing nonentity the *Spear* had not yet taken heed.

Thanks to the enterprising journal, a new interest pervaded Nether Overtoun. Mr. Grant was doing well. He was gaining the ear of Nether Overtoun. The *Spear* said so, knowing, as it asserted, all about Mr. Grant. Mr. Grant began to think that it knew more about him than he himself did.

The *Spear* printed an article on the Grants, incidentally explaining the meaning of the name John. It published illustrations of the Spey Valley, from whence the Grants presumably originated, and detailed the feuds of that clan with full-blooded gusto. Ten



Grant tartan pleated skirts were offered in prizes in the Woman's Page, and prizes were given to the juveniles who illustrated best the outline drawing of a Grant stronghold. The life of the earlier chieftains was hinted at—a mingling of mountain savagery and aristocratic hauteur—and parallels were suggested with the earlier Buonapartes in Corsica and the first fierce Habsburgs on their castle crag. The surname was one-syllabled, and this was explained as being auspicious in Scots history, the names of Bruce, Knox, Burns, and Scott indicating the happiness of the omen.

Following the article came interviews. They appeared daily, and dealt with Mr. Grant's beliefs on War, Philately, the National Debt, the Cloch Lighthouse, Glasgow's Subway System, the Man in the Iron Mask, Transubstantiation, Death, and Immortality.

Flora bought an album with thick green pages and poppy-ornamented covers. She mixed flour and water to make a paste, and having cut out all the articles and paragraphs dealing with Grant, she pasted them carefully into the album.

She regarded Grant with bewildered re-

spect. Knowing well that no special talent is required to obtain notice in a newspaper, Flora conceded that extraordinary ability must be required for the felicity of a special article. There was intoxication in seeing his name coupled so frequently with Mr. McGuffie's and Lord Quincey's. Aware of Grant's poverty, too familiar with his gramophone peregrinations, and conscious that she had paid for the shirt on his back, no social affinity could exist between him and those grandees of Socialism and Conservatism; that she knew. Seeking for a solution, she guessed shrewdly that the equality must be of an abstract, an intangible variety—an intellectual equality, she guessed. She was not able to epitomize her conclusions in a phrase, but she knew what she meant.

Flora now had the *Spear* delivered to her in the mornings. She thirsted to read the latest about him before he rose for breakfast. She was always up first, dressed immediately, and commenced preparing the morning meal. Then she would go through to make her own bed, and on coming back would find Grant shaving. Whilst putting the finishing touches to the table she would chatter volubly, telling him the latest news

about himself, and he would listen with grave interest, for sometimes he learned things that were new to him.

"I never said that," he would protest when she disclosed some unusual opinion by him.

"Well, it's there! It's in print," she would retort triumphantly.

He would study the part pointed out with serious attention, ultimately concluding that he must have said it. For everything had grown very remarkable. But a few days ago he had been a tramp. Now a powerful journal treated his views with respect and awe. Grant reflected reverently that truth wins, slowly perhaps, but inevitably. His was a cause. He had spoken it aloud, and the cause was coming into its own.

Therefore when he stood at a street corner and cried "O people!" it was not in the spirit of one attempting an impossible task, but in the certainty of victory. The on-lookers crowded round with keener interest; they had read of him. Those passing on the far side stopped, peered hopefully, and crossed to listen. Policemen had to keep a way clear for traffic.

He was the proud man, not for his own sake, but for the sake of attainment. The

League of Nations was seldom from his mind ; it, and William Wallace. He thought of that man with rapture, with mystical intensity, and his mind was filled with pity.

“ I preach abstention from party, yet I ask your support for Mr. McGuffie. I am not supporting Mr. McGuffie for his beliefs, but for one of his beliefs. There is nothing strange in a man gaining the faith of opposing faction. Christ is revered by the Moham-medans. Gautama is in the Roman Catholic Calendar of Saints. Elect the simple large-souled man who has pledged himself to support a great ideal.”

Mr. McGuffie, thus designated, had been making considerable efforts on his own behalf. With more surprise than gratitude he had heard from his lieutenants that Grant was canvassing for him. Mr. McGuffie felt well able to fight for himself, ever since on his first day at serving his time at a trade he had broken the nose of an impudent fellow-apprentice. Glorifying in his own self-made sufficiency, he had growled at the space devoted to Grant's activities in the *Spear*, more so as that journal disregarded Grant's injunctions on his behalf.

“ If,” he remarked with heavy sarcasm,



“Nether Overtoun goes Labour, I’d like to think that some of the credit was mine.”

His self-love received a further jolt, and from a friendly quarter. *The Workers’ Dawn*, a weekly, splashed a rose-tinted poster on every second-rate newsagent’s in Glasgow. The first-rate shops, while selling it, refused to advertise the fact.

GRANT  
SUPPORTS  
McGUFFIE

‘The battle,’ said *The Workers’ Dawn*, ‘which Comrade Jimmy McGuffie is putting up in Nether Overtoun against the vested interests of the Coal Barons, the Titled Classes, the Whisky Kings, and the Shipping Czars, has the wholehearted support of the working classes. Comrade Viscount Nigel Maximilien Fitzadhelm Quincey is beginning to look a bittie white about the gills and the steady tramp of democracy is echoing in the gilded saloons of the idle rich who are fattening on the pale-faced under-nourished children of our foetid slums and battenning with insolent cynicism on the ignorance and credulity of those John Willies of the working classes who are dead from the Adam’s apple upwards.’



‘Jimmy is the lad to ladle out the stuff hot and steaming. Some of the Nether Overtoun electors are hearing things that they never knew before and are already beginning to sit up and blink. How many of them know that Lord Quincey’s father, the Right Honourable the Earl of Tranent, has been divorced twice, the first co-respondent being a girl at the Lapin Agile in Paris and the second his own housekeeper? How many know that this worthy gentleman draws £8,432 3s. 8d. yearly in land rents and £17,824 3s. 4½d. in mining royalties? Why does Lord Quincey seek to enter parliament? He can afford to be unemployed.

‘This elegant young nyach, comrades, thought he was in for something easy, but he is finding that more goes to the winning of a constituency than suède-topped, pearl-buttoned boots and the flick of an eau-de-Cologne-scented hankie. The eau-de-Cologne, comrades, is to minimize the odour from your own proletarian carcasses! Nether Overtoun must decide for itself if it will lick the hand that insults it.

‘Greater than anything is the unsolicited help given Jimmy from the most unlikely quarters. We all know our old friend Sir

Frederick Saltire. Freddy's a corker, a pure treat, comrades. After trying to coerce the Government to build an air base at Tierra del Fuego and attempting to throw white-wash on the Masterson-Barrason Blackmail Swindling Case (exposed in these columns last April), friend Freddy tries to come the innocent guy in the great *Sneer*. The *Sneer*, "the working man's paper." Oh, John Willie!

' Freddy, who is a sleeping partner in the Rio Sant' Anna del Trinidad Gold Exploitation Trust (capital £20,000,000) and a very wide-awake director of the Llandachfechfoch-machinstumwdy Mining Syndicate (with a capital of £13,000,000, the other directors being Sir Isaac Jacobson, Sir Jacob Isaacson and Sir Angus McKellar), has decided to enter the Nether Overtoun election business.

' To assist the gay galliard Quincey, you say? No, comrades! Too many deluded working men buy the *Sneer* for its racing tips, and Freddy knows on which side his bread is buttered. Freddy is looking for sensations, and he is exploiting a working man . . . naturally! John Grant is the name of the working man. We should say Comrade John Grant, for we know a decent man instinctively.

‘ Freddy has been boosting the fancy side of the business. We are not hearing so much about Jimmy McGuffie or wee Comrade Quincey. It’s all John Grant we’re hearing about.

‘ But here’s the rub ! *All during the election Comrade John Grant has been supporting the Labour candidate !*

‘ Comrade Baronet Saltire hasn’t breathed a cheep about that. As we regret his unfortunate deafness and dumbness, we take it on ourselves to tell the world. Yes, comrades, John Grant supports Labour. Workers of the World, unite ! Before the glorious dawn of proletarian splendour rises upon this manacled world the dope merchants and cocaine slingers of the trusts and combines must be exposed. This week we have chosen Sir Frederick Saltire, Bart., K.B.E., of Bressingham Manor, Northants ; Slapsley Place, Kingston-on-Thames ; the Villa Paradiso, Lugano ; the Château du Joli Tambour, Haute Loire ; and Carlton House Terrace . . . and we think we have put *his* gas at a peep ! ’

Flora saw the poster and bought *The Workers’ Dawn*.

“What’s all this about you and Sir Frederick Saltire?” she demanded.

Grant said he had never heard of him. He spoke the truth, for Sir Frederick’s was a post-war pre-eminence gained during the years when Grant seldom saw a newspaper. He read the article through. “It may help the cause,” he said.

The revelation by *The Workers’ Dawn* pleased all with Labour sympathies except Mr. McGuffie. In his heart Mr. McGuffie admitted that the activities of Grant might be helpful, and he disliked Grant accordingly. Unwilling to share the triumph of a possible victory with another, Mr. McGuffie preferred that the credit should be so widely distributed that he alone would retain prominence. A determined effort by him to secure the stars and comets of his party was successful.

Mr. David Birkwood appeared in the agitated constituency in a cloud of rage, poetry, and invective. He quoted Burns, threw verbal bombshells, and departed by the Night Scot. Mr. Paxton shook his lank black mane, stretched forth denunciatory digits and breathed frenzy tinctured with mordant wit. A privy councillor appeared and lost his temper, and was followed by another



who dropped his aitches. They all thought that the people of Nether Overtoun were a remarkably fine lot.

The electors raised the goblet of adulation to their quivering lips and quaffed deliciously.

In the midst of the uproar Grant preached his creed, gaining a greater hearing than all the M.P.s put together had gained.

Lord Quincey's supporters took alarm, the young lord himself being evidently indifferent. Into Nether Overtoun was imported Mr. Winshell, who got cheers in the Central Station and boos in Argyle Street. Lord Strantford received a more sympathetic hearing, having taken the precaution of choosing the more favourable locality, but both those gentlemen were eclipsed by the democratic aristocracy of the Duke and Duchess of Dumbarton, who made a belated but effective entry.

The breezy manner, florid features, and smiling countenance of the Duke, the matronly dignity of the Duchess, the athletic prowess of their heir the Marquis of Kilbarchan, who had captained the village football team, toured for a week with a boxing troupe, and swum from the Cloch to the Gantocks ; the willowy charm of the Lady



Shirley Brus and the Lady Janiveer Brus, who could knit, crochet, make samplers, scour grates, breed poultry, and knew the difference between a seam and a hem, was famous; these attractions, it was believed, would prove invincible. And for the remainder of the election the Dumbarton family scoured Nether Overtoun as thoroughly as Shirley and Janiveer could scour grates. The young and inexperienced girls penetrated the poorest quarters, where the electors, being experienced, said nothing offensive. Lord Kilbarchan's photographs were displayed, muscles and all, and his threat to wipe the floor with one interrupter was well thought of. The lifelong friendship between Lord Kilbarchan and Lord Quincey was commented on in the daily press, although there was no such friendship in fact, for Lord Quincey hated Lord Kilbarchan and his muscles.

During these summer days a brassy sun shone from a cloudless sky, but at night the atmosphere was suffused with unearthly purple light. A seer would have foretold the approach of great events.

In political travail, oppressed and bewildered by belching eloquence, alternately

soothed and terrified by the pictures conjured before it, Nether Overtoun bore the blast from every airt, trembling in the throes of its dubiety.

"O people," cried Grant, the night wind cool upon his cheek, his face pale with the exertions he had undertaken, "I foresee a new dawn and a new day."

Daily he spoke to Flora of the disinterested efforts of the *Spear* and Mr. McGuffie. While he was out she would try to read a book, in a state of nerves induced by the smouldering excitement of the man who occupied her house. For the parties in the contest he had nothing but contempt. "They're just the same tune," he assured her, "but played in different time."

"But the Conservative leaders are all rich, aren't they? And the Socialist leaders all poor?"

"They all look well fed in my eyes," he said briefly.

"But"—she stopped and looked at him helplessly—"what will it all amount to, John? What do you expect to get from all this speaking? I know your name's in the paper and all that . . . but I don't know," she ended abruptly.

"Don't know what, Flora?"

"I don't know how things will end with you. Nor with me," she added so softly as to be almost inaudible. She gripped the lapels of his coat nervously. "I'm afraid," she said indistinctly, "of your success."

"I'm sorry you should say that, Flora, for that disheartens me."

"Oh, can you not understand!" she cried sharply. "I'm not afraid of your success on yourself. I'm afraid of your success on me. What could I be doing then?"

"You would have a new life."

"Ah, maybe! Maybe a life so new that it would be gey old to me. I know! Who's that man who's always coming to the door now? That man you go out with."

"That's Mr. Rattray of the *Spear*."

"And you can't tell me," she cried jealously. "These are things I've not to know."

"If you care to ask I'll tell you," he said with resignation.

"You might have told me, John. It's friendlier. I don't want to nose into your affairs, John. But I like you to be confidential. After all . . ." Flora was uncertain, and then speaking rapidly she said: "After all, I've done something for you. But you——"

"Have I not?" he interrupted sharply. "Well, maybe not. I've done one thing for you. Whether it was a big thing or not simply depends on your own character."

She burst into tears. "That's right—cast up," she exclaimed like a schoolgirl. "It's all right for you," she cried accusingly. "You'll maybe get money and titles and all the rest some day, but where will I be then?"

"When I saw you first, Flora," he said slowly, "yon night, you looked like an evil flower. I can't understand it. I cannot understand it at all. For you are so childish and innocent in so many things. I was once engaged to be married and the girl was cuter than you."

Instinct revived her most feminine feelings, and she showed liveliest interest in the disclosure.

"It is when I think of you, Flora, that I feel the greatest love for mankind, and the greatest confidence in it. For how can we be really evil when such as you—such as you are supposed to be and were—can be so helpless and confiding?"

"In you, Flora, all humanity suffers and all humanity carries the hope of redemption. I have a cause. I am the mouthpiece only.

But you are greater than I am. For you are a cause.

"You are unconscious of it. You see yourself as a woman and you see me as a man. Flora, we will never be anything more than friends. For in you I see the humble masses of the earth, trying to laugh in their sorrows and smiling in their woe, innocently unaware of the magnitude of their sufferings, unsuspecting their own boundless heroisms.

"The people of this city have seen you and appraised you. I can see in you only a simple girl without trace of what you have known and what you have suffered. Surely those who have known you carried away with them a fragment of your simple spirit.

"The past is past, Flora. If that is what worries you, worry no more."

While he had been speaking the girl at first had fixed her gaze obstinately on the floor. Stealing a glance at him, she was shaken by the gentleness of his expression. To her troubled mind he seemed at the moment as a saint.

She was dazzled by the thought. A routine of disorder had passed away, and there was quiet now, and peace of mind. The realization excited her. His words



dropped gently into her senses with the clear sweet ring of precious stones. Vaguely she understood the value of the spiritual things of which he had spoken and which she had not cared to understand.

“That was what worried me,” she whispered. “That—and you.”

“Worry no more.”

#### IV

In the evening, glad that the election would soon be over, Flora saw Grant depart and settled herself with a magazine. After an hour she wearied, and opening the window of her bedroom leaned out to the sunny street.

Beneath, the children of the tenement sprawled and bickered. One of them saw her.

“Aw, Flora,” he called appealingly, “see’s a penny.”

“Whit fur?” she demanded in the patois of the neighbourhood, being a wise girl.

“Fur sweeties, Flora.”

She cast a halfpenny to the entreating child. “There!” she cried, “divide that amang yous.”

“Gi’e me a penny, tae,” pleaded a little sister of the fortunate boy. “Aw, Flora! Aw!”

"Awa' and bile your can," said Flora blithely, and affecting obliviousness of the contending children, devoted her interest to the adjacent thoroughfare.

People were standing and gazing. "A fight," she thought carelessly. "Drunk men."

Then sounded in her ears, as yet faintly, the rhythmic sound of marching. It increased in volume. She could hear the harsh voices of men and the harsher accents of women.

Idly curious, the girl leaned farther out that she might miss nothing of the approaching parade. With consternation she saw Grant marching at the head of a procession!

Grant had left the house to make a grand final plea for Mr. McGuffie. He did so, to a friendly crowd. The conclusion of his remarks was followed by a violent uproar as general attention was diverted to a nearby argument between a half-tipsy man and a woman in the same condition.

"I telt ye tae leave wan o' them for me," she commented passionately, and rained blows on him.

Grant interposed. "Was it a child?" he asked gently.

She suspended her operations to survey

him with contempt. "It was a bottle," she cried shrilly, and returned to her opponent.

"You mustn't do that to your husband," Grant said chidingly. "Leave him alone."

"He's no' my husband," she shouted, and finding that her victim had disappeared in the crowd, turned on Grant. They became the centre of a laughing crowd which pelted them with advice, mainly ribald.

Grant found then with dismay that neither the woman nor the crowd were anxious to lose him. He edged away, and she followed, and he judged from certain remarks of hers that she was not unwilling for his company. Hoping that the brighter glitter of Argyle Street might deflect the crowd, Grant saw that his move there had quadrupled it.

"If there was only a policeman handy!" he thought.

The woman had obtained a firm clutch of his sleeve and tripped beside him as daintily as she could.

She was a gaunt, hard-faced, red-skinned woman of more than forty. As he looked at her she flashed a pitifully coquettish smile at him.

"Take that," he said, thrusting a shilling into her palm, "and go, for God's sake." He thought of Flora, and felt sick at heart.

Finding that the staring people on the pavement obstructed the progress he desired, Grant stepped on to the street—a false move, for the crowd followed, not yet understanding that the incident with the woman was concluded. He pressed swiftly on, leaving the poor wreck staring after him in surprise, and the crowd as swiftly pressed behind him.

“Whit’s the gemm?” demanded a raucous-voiced youth who stood at a corner with his associates.

“We’re supporting McGuffie. C’mon.”

The corner crowd joined in, hoping for trouble. “Vote for McGuffie,” they shouted hilariously, rapturously. “Vote for McGuffie.”

On Grant’s tongue lay the words that would explain matters, he was certain. He had only to tell them that his speech was concluded—abruptly, no doubt, but quite concluded, and so good night. But he hesitated. To stand now would attract a crowd—a larger crowd—and he felt inadequate to the prospect of explaining what was past to those not yet arrived. Questions would be asked; the traffic obstructed; police would appear . . .

He walked on.

This action gained the whole-hearted sympathy of all present, and they endorsed it in practical fashion by sharing his progress. Every man possessed his neighbour's moral support and physical proximity; the gregarious instinct was satisfied.

They approved of Grant. They liked him because he was shabby, they respected him because he knew things they were ignorant of, and they admired him because he told them what to do.

On the long broad summer-strewn street, with the gilded sky above as a painted canopy and a tall church spire probing like a lance into the silken fabric, walked Grant, and behind him walked his following.

Poorly clad in every way, their wretched clothes were yet more comforting than the tarnished garments of their minds, so long abused by idleness and want. The finer texture of their characters had warped in the wear. In an environment that knows small pity and suffers weakness less the brightness of their souls had dulled. One virtue they all had, and that in strength. They had humour.

Miraculously the crowd became a proces-



sion. It sorted itself out, formed into fours, and moved steadily, intently, with rude precision. As it passed it left a glamour, and as it came it cast a warning, for windows were raised, heads craned forth, the people in the side streets ran to see it pass.

With surprising delicacy none marched beside the leader. He walked alone. Instinctively the marchers knew that every movement requires a head, and conscious of their own incompleteness they silently conceded that place to Grant. They were marching, and surely that was enough! If he had something to do, let him do it.

For the tipsy woman was now forgotten. The leaven of new-comers swamped the original members. Inquirers were informed that the march was in support of Mr. McGuffie. And they joined in.

“We are the boys who never make a noise,  
Long point, short point, in—out—*jab!*”

they sang, proud of public interest.

Grant calmed himself with reflection on the cause. Escape he believed impossible. Was it possible, he wondered, to effect some deed or demonstration that would thrill the country while these people were obeying or

at any rate following him? The thought would not desert him. He squared his shoulders and thrilled at unguessed happenings. A leadership had been conferred upon him. He accepted it.

Delayed at a crossing the procession halted, quivering along its length like a questioning centipede. In a loud voice Grant shouted: "Wallace and the League of Nations." The traffic moved. As he stepped forward he raised an adjuring arm. "Vote for McGuffie and the League."

Not oppressed by the crusade, the units of the procession maintained a cheerful exchange of badinage. To alleviate their monotony they chirped to the shopgirls who came to their doors.

"Awa' hame, Maggie, your faither's in jile."

"Aw, Geraldine, tickle me under the oxter."

"Have you seen McCann?" and when an unsuspecting virgin asked, "What McCann?" they shouted, "Ma can o' tea!"

They sang also. Several who had known army life, like he who had sung of the bayonet practice, chose numbers popular with the military. One attempted "Mac-

Cafferty," but finding that dolorous song incompatible with marching, discarded it for civilian lays.

"Who's the faither o' the big fat wean,  
The big fat wean, the big fat wean;  
Who's the faither o' the big fat wean,  
Will naebody gie me an answer?"

Grant listened with some vexation. The songs favoured did not assort with the solemnity of his cause. If they would sing "Scots Wha Hae," he reflected complainingly. The goal of all his efforts was Geneva, but a geneva of a different kind seemed indicated by that too elastic musical range. With good cause he hoped they would not take the short step from the frivolous to the obscene.

"The polisman's the faither o' the big fat wean,  
The big fat wean, the big fat wean;  
The polisman's the faither . . ."

It was about this time that Flora joined in. She did not march with the procession. Stunned by what she saw from the window, the girl had crushed a hat on and ran to speak to Grant. But the jokes of the processionists daunted her. She let them pass, contenting herself with following at a short distance. Grant had not observed her.

"I met the girl with the curly locks,  
Parleyvoo, soldier, how are you?  
I gave her a shilling——"

Grant wheeled round with a white face.  
"Tell that man behind if he doesn't shut  
up I'll come and break his jaw."

"Aw, don't rouse it. Comin' the gallus  
client, are you? Trying to act the hot  
citizen?"

"I'm only singin'," expostulated the man.  
"Jese, you don't objec' tae a b—— singin',  
dae you?"

"You'll sing what I tell you to sing.  
Sing 'Scots Wha Hae.'"

"We do' know it," was the sulky response.

"Then you can learn it—now." Grant  
repeated the first verse. "Strike up. Keep  
on singing the first verse if you don't know  
the others. Keep on singing it till I tell  
you to stop. You chaps join in."

They were now under the railway bridge.  
"Scotland and the League of Nations. Re-  
member Wallace," he shouted to the amazed  
pedestrians. "Now—sing."

So the procession marched into the centre  
of the city singing "Scots Wha Hae."

The docility of his followers pleased Grant.  
He had taught discipline, and the knowledge

was comforting. But he shrewdly guessed that something was expected of him in return, and having led or been forced to lead them thus far, he was uncertain of his next step.

Past the foot of Union Street they marched, pursued by the curious gaze of all. More silent they became, conscious of approaching a quarter foreign to their lives : a locality of fine shops and expensive wares. They were subdued in spirit by the things and atmosphere they hated for being unattainable, and this feeling was sensed by their leader. "Why are you silent?" he asked. "Sing something. Sing 'Johnny Cope,' or 'Charlie Is My Darling,' or 'The Campbells Are Coming.' Sing anything."

None knew these songs.

"Scotland and the League of Nations," Grant shouted, wheeling into Buchanan Street. "We demand the representation of Scotland in the League of Nations." He was surprised to see a number of policemen marching with the procession. Actually they had made themselves part of it.

Past jewellers' shops of precious treasures, past warehouses hinting of priceless furs, past banks containing undreamed wealth



they marched, and Grant thought with the desperation demanded of immediate action. His lips grew dry and pale and his eyes glittered in their restless quest from side to side.

The sun had gone, leaving an exquisite saffron sky when he turned his column into St. Vincent Place and from thence the short distance to George Square. In the warmth of the summer night the public seats were crammed with poor people, dejected creatures who stared with dull interest through the statues and greenery at the approaching demonstrators. Contrasting with the wretchedness of its frequenters, the Square was bright with glowing flower-beds, plots of grass, and the vivid mail vans. The upper windows of the council chambers glistened greenish-yellow reflection.

Grant was seized by inspiration. "Here, in the Square, I'll speak. This is the proper place. I'll make the speech of my life. I'll smash down the walls of ignorance. This is the place!" And he deployed his column before the council chambers, with a twinge of apprehension lest they might resent having walked so far merely for the felicity of hearing an address.

For the first time in thirty minutes he enjoyed peace of mind. Around were statues to the illustrious dead, and he thought with a glow of the apt illustrations he could draw therefrom. He cleared his throat and smiled. "O people!"

And at that moment Flora sprang from the expectant crowd and clutched his arm. She pointed with a trembling finger. From South Frederick Street, in orderly formation and with awe-inspiring deliberateness, marched a formidable squad of police. "Do you want the clink?" she whispered frenziedly; then turning to the crowd she shouted: "Scat, you fools."

Without pause or question the crowd broke, jostling around them in hurry and alarm. Tears of relief were in the girl's eyes. "Oh, come away quickly," she cried anxiously.

He watched his dispersing followers, and could have wept. "See what you've done!" he said venomously. "But for you we would have fought it out."

"Oh, come away," she cried in an agony. "See! they're coming. They had their eye on you—they'll get you." In a moment she and Grant would be alone. She dragged

the unwilling man to the farther corner, behind shrub and effigy.

"I'm a fool to follow you," he burst out, and wrenched his arm from hers. "And I was the bigger fool ever to have anything to do with you. My hopes, my plans, my cause——"

"Hell mend your cause," she cried passionately. "Did I not see one of the slops slip into a telephone-box! Did you lead those folk here? You think it was! It was the bobbies who did it. They brought you here while they got a squad from the Central. Oh, John Grant, but you're a simple wean!"

He glared at her with quivering nostrils, with heavy breath. All at once his procession had grown very dear to him. "Good-bye," he said, and turned and left her.

## V

Mr. McGuffie won the election with a margin of three hundred and sixty-five votes. Addressing the public after the announcement, he stated that the principles of Socialism had gained a great moral victory. But later, in a confidential aside to his chief henchman, he remarked: "I think that yon daft b—— rung the bell for me."

## PART FOUR

### I

THE reverberations of the Nether Over-toun by-election softened and died, leaving Mr. McGuffie in the ascendant and Lord Quincey in a state of eclipse.

Mr. McGuffie's party declared that the unexpected victory was a triumph for their principles, but the *Spear* proudly claimed the victory as its own. Its unofficial nominee Mr. Grant had, the *Spear* asserted, proved the clamant necessity for a simplified system of government, and the election result was a sign of dissatisfaction with existing conditions. It meant nothing more. For the future announcements of Mr. Grant, England and Scotland would wait with breathless impatience.

For the *Spear* was uneasy.

Young Mr. Rattray had early made himself a constant visitor at Flora's house. There took place the conversations that provided the *Spear* with its exclusive inter-

views and Flora with jealous curiosity. Mr. Rattray, whose achievements had been in the sphere of police courts and street accidents, was now well on the way to a sub-editorship in Fleet Street.

"Beautiful day, Miss Grant. Is your brother in?" he would say, beaming. Flora could only ask him to enter, hating, as she did, all reporters on principle.

In some fashion she connected Mr. Rattray with Grant's march to George Square. She liked to think that Rattray had incited him to it. That march might have disrupted her friendship with Grant for ever. It had not done so; Grant had come to her house that night very late and had begged her pardon for speaking so harshly. But the possible results of his bitter words would not forgo their claim. She thought of the incident with anger, and with resentment, and terror.

The barren trek had caused sensation. In passing the boundary of Nether Overtoun the processionists had unconsciously deserted the bounds of local politics for the wider sphere of national interest, and news of the march was read in every household. Journals hitherto contemptuous of Grant



as a stunt of the *Spear* did not ignore his latest manifestation and referred to it in terms of sarcasm, gravity, and alarm, hoping that the *Spear's* prophet had worked his own undoing. His name was familiar from John o' Groat's to Land's End. He had arrived.

The *Spear* had described the march as a great protest by public-spirited citizens against a cumbrous and unwieldy parliamentary machine. But never yet had it made any reference to William Wallace or the League of Nations, an omission that distressed Grant. He could not understand the *Spear's* reluctance to complete the cycle of his revelation.

"We can give this chap so much rope," said the editor to his assistant, "but this paper is non-political, and it'll remain so. We don't know what Sir Frederick's future attitude to the League of Nations may be. He'd be down on us like a ton of bricks. This Grant is beginning to worry me. I'm sorry we ever took him up. However," he added thankfully, "we can now drop him."

Two days later he found cause to change his decision.

For as Mr. Rattray ascended the stair to Flora's house he met a man coming down.

Grant in conversation remarked that there had been a visitor to the house, a gentleman from *The Workers' Dawn*. The now alert Rattray elicited that he had requested something from Grant for publication. "An interview?" he queried breathlessly.

"Oh no—not that. Articles, I think." Informatively he added: "Curious . . . he offered to pay for them."

"Articles—what about?" asked the anxious young man.

"He left that to me. Of course, I'd have no doubt about my choice . . . the League of Nations. You see, I supported Mr. McGuffie, and this Socialist paper is anxious to open its columns to me as a grateful acknowledgment."

"Grateful hell," thought the young worldling. Aloud he asked what Grant intended to do.

"I'll let him know this afternoon. Of course, I'm glad of the chance to air my views."

"Why, you've had the *Spear* for that! You don't compare *The Workers' Dawn* to the *Spear*, surely!"

"The *Spear* says nothing about the League. I sometimes think your paper completely misunderstands my message."

Mr. Rattray thought hard for a moment. Abruptly he asked: "How much are they offering you?"

The question displeased Grant and he replied lightly: "Oh, a hundred pounds."

Ten minutes later Mr. Rattray was in a telephone-box and in another five he was back in Flora's house. "You've never been at the office?" he asked in friendly fashion.

"Never."

"Come along now and I'll show you round the place," urged Mr. Rattray genially. "You'll be interested."

On laying down the receiver the editor of the *Spear* called on his assistant editor and explained matters. "We've made Grant, and *The Workers' Dawn* wants to enjoy him. Of course, they had in yon hit at Sir Frederick and about Grant's support of McGuffie, but their circulation is limited. Grant's audiences were limited, too. And no one can pin down Grant's verbal statements. But if *The Workers' Dawn* is going to spread out Grant for weeks we'll be in an awkward position. That procession

spoiled things. Other papers will make something of it, and our Tory readers won't like to know that we supported a man who supported Labour. Sir Frederick will raise Cain. I'm going to make a contract with this chap. Rattray says *The Workers' Dawn* have offered him a hundred. They haven't a hundred to offer, and Rattray's a fool. But we've got to take Grant at his own valuation. We've got to. It would sicken a dog."

"And what," inquired the assistant, "is the contract for?"

"A monopoly of his interviews and everything else for the next six months. I'll tell him to send in some articles. By that time he'll be forgotten."

"Will we publish them?"

"No."

Grant met the editor, the assistant editor, and the manager of the *Spear* and a gentleman named McMurdo. When he left the *Spear* office he had one copy of a contract in his pocket and a cheque for one hundred and fifty pounds. Sir Frederick had impressed on his subordinates that he did not object to money being spent provided it was well spent.

"I think," remarked the editor of the *Spear*, mimicking *The Workers' Dawn*, "that we've put Grant's gas at a peep. Curious . . . he didn't seem to know that he was blackmailing us."

Flora had never before seen a cheque. "It's great," she repeated, fingering the glossy yellow paper.

"It's miraculous," Grant said. "The last few weeks have been full of surprises. You've brought me luck. And, Flora, I think we should get that other house you wanted."

"That's the ticket for soup!" she declared, and straightway commenced the search. The week following saw them in a tenement house of a better type with a nameplate 'Grant' on the outside door.

They were in a new locality and they might have been in another world. They were unknown. There was little difference in the financial status of their new and their late neighbours, but that difference march-dyked indigence and self-respect. Here people were law-abiding and children were clean. The street was reposeful; it led to a fine thoroughfare of attractive shops. Trees were not distant. The air was pleasant.



The key of the old house had been left next door. Minnie Sanderson could do what she liked with it.

Flora amazed him by her sense of money values in the purchase of furnishings. She felt well pleased with the result, inwardly conscious that they were both half crazy. For when the cheque—as she chose to refer to the money received for that endorsed and vanished piece of paper—was finished, what had they to live on? Her own slender finances were now practically exhausted.

The new house consisted of a bedroom and a kitchen, a lobby and a bathroom. The bedroom was occupied by Grant and faced the street, and the kitchen, by an unusual architectural departure in houses of that size, looked to a green which was backed by trees and the boundary wall of a school. The playgrounds stretched from the wall to a distant line of houses, and an expanse of sky was visible not common from a tenement. The kitchen faced west, and in the evenings red splendid sunsets spread across heaven, flooding the quiet apartment with flame and vermilion glow.

Grant had been asked by the departing

tenant to buy the room fender and the pulleys, and she had thrown in as a gift four flower-pots on the kitchen window-sill. They contained nasturtiums, now in full bloom and like the evening skies in colour. Flora would sniff them delightedly as she poked her head above them to gaze down at her neighbour's washings or glance up to the adjacent greens with their tall fine trees. The kitchen window was kept open so that the nasturtiums could look in at her. They were friendly flowers.

One Sunday morning she breakfasted alone. As usual the window was open; then sunshine was there, rare and golden, and sea-gulls wheeled above the blue slate roofs of the school. Boys were selling newspapers; their shrill cries broke into the breathless chimes of the Episcopal cathedral. Another church gave warning with an impressive unmusical single note, and then for a time there was silence.

Flora sat thinking.

She had finished her meal, and the empty cup was vacantly before her, in a saucer into which some tea had spilled. Neat little pats of butter were on a dish for which she had paid sixpence, and in another sixpenny dish

was marmalade. There was brown bread on one plate and white toasted bread on another, a spotless glass bowl containing sugar and a dainty jug containing milk. The cutlery visible glittered with the evidence of recent polishing and the table-cloth was white like snow.

She sat now with fingers interlocked pondering half-consciously on the surprises of existence. Her eyes were fixed on the flowers. She was vaguely aware of the seagulls beyond and their sharp protesting cries, and of the cold sunshine upon the red school walls.

Into the silence suddenly broke the singing of a woman. Shrilly she sang, without tune and with great clarity. It was a hymn she sang, and the great quadrangle in which the school was centred became filled with the strong clear notes of her voice. In these surroundings, and at that hour and in that atmosphere, the hymn swelled into a volume of forlorn loyalty, breathing a pathetic insistence, a melancholy reminder of days past that were full of sorrow, of days to come of which no deed was known.

‘We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll.’

Flora listened. She thought the woman's voice was liquid music and she wondered what pass had brought the woman to sing on the streets. She wondered. A flush of gratitude settled round her heart at her own late-found gladness. The words spoke to her with poignant meaning. She heard them with painful intentness, fearing for the moment when the sounds would cease. Intuitively she was aware that it would linger in her memory for ever—that calm clear Sabbath into which had intruded misery, singing of salvation.

To Grant, conscious of having accomplished something, the temporary rest was pleasant.

He experienced the sensation of pause, casting back his mind to the last few busy weeks and thinking in anticipation of what might lie ahead. These days possessed the charm of novelty. Enjoyable hours were spent in Flora's company, striding into the country, and he had the taste of that felicity which he had not known for years—the delight of being alone in the company of a young woman—a felicity so childishly simple and yet so subtle.



Recollecting the years he had tramped the country-side, lonely save for an idea, and acknowledging the ease with which he had discarded the outward symbols of his cause, he marvelled. Was all kind of success, he wondered, epitomized in a change of attire? Did a clean shirt indicate achievement, and a handful of bank-notes, triumph? He pondered on this, not unhappily, nor oblivious of the glances of passers-by. He was tall; he carried his clothes well. His eyes were impressive.

He remembered the days of his dreams. He was to have fought his way to victory dressed in the vestments of poverty. For poverty, while not incorruptible, is a symbol of incorruption. He was to have led a roaring people, himself a ragged banner, to the goal of desire; a people roaring with one voice for the League of Nations. More likely he would lead them now with a fancy tie as an oriflamme; he would charm them with his message and fascinate them with his patterned socks.

The thought was at once comical and tragic, and he knew a pang of regret for the poverty he had surrendered. He would then think of Flora, of his cheque, of his



new clothes, and smile in his confusion. He felt convicted of a renegade act.

Co-existent was the stimulating thought that he was entitled to some enjoyment. It was a new thought for Grant, and almost became a belief. He assured himself that he was young—he was thirty-six, almost a youth by modern standards—and he saw on every hand evidence of the never-failing pleasure of friendship and affection. In that pleasure he was participating—for the first time since his twentieth year. Sixteen years had passed, and in that period he had never—“Never what?” he asked himself with a start—never known that galliard complacency derived from attendance on the other sex and which receives dependence in return. He was glad that he had adopted Flora as a sister.

Flora also was glad. Not hampered by political hankerings, and having learned by experience, generally bitter, to accommodate herself to all circumstances, Flora was satisfied. She believed that she was making Grant happy, the kind of thought that is consoling to any woman. Gazing at him, she felt acutest satisfaction in his new suit and polished boots. She did not accept the

transformation as a miracle (her beliefs did not tend to the supernatural), but she was prepared to regard it as her own personal achievement. Admitting that the *Spear* and indirectly the cause had altered the social status of her companion, Flora argued that his progress from tramp to Press contributor would not have displayed the impress of conviction without her zeal.

Thought of the consummation of Grant's ambitions—and there she was as much confused as he—made her slightly timid. She could not readily dispel a vision of Grant in a luxurious motor-car, top-hatted and frock-coated, waving a gloved hand to the cheering multitude, and she felt that in that picture there was no place for her. Her past existence was not the reason for the belief. Flora hoped to live anything down. But she wanted Grant to be continually and perpetually near her. And she realized that such an existence as she desired could not be obtained save in seclusion.

Change had overtaken her point of view. He was the best man she had known. She had made that decision quickly and time had affirmed it. She had loved his quiet rapt moods, his absent manner when she

would be speaking to him, the piercing trustworthiness in his eyes. He would sit beside her silent for a full half-hour.

She liked such a manifestation now. He had said that he would treat her as a sister, and he was ! That decision had at first run contrary to her own instincts, but her feelings changed. She was not kept by him as a chattel, she told herself proudly ; her position was not degrading or uncertain. As he kept her near him it must be for her companionship. Evidently he considered her a creature of some merit. That reflection pleased her. She was elevated in her own esteem by the belief. In a groping fashion she sensed a strange new relationship, devoid of fleshly bond.

The one man whom she had really cared for placed her above all worldly intention ; he had desired an affinity that transcended any she had known ; that knew nothing of gain or attraction.

She pondered over his words with absorbed humility. An apposite example came unbidden to her mind, and she adopted it reverently and as though confided with a great trust. No outward change in her was apparent. Her speech was bantering and

she used much slang. Within her burned a question that became unquenchable belief.

She lingered over her discovery lovingly, her mind in a gentle bemusement.

Grant had formulated a pact. Flora ratified it.

## II

In the House of Commons sat a gentleman named Mr. Jonathan Gilder, usually very silent. But a heated discussion having arisen regarding some proposed changes in the Riot Act, Mr. Gilder arose and addressed some eloquent words on the dangers of mob law, referring to a certain recent incident in Glasgow. Whereupon several members told Mr. Gilder that he was a liar, and one particularized him as a gilded gutter-snipe.

Mr. Gilder declared passionately that Glasgow was a bed of Bolshevism in which Treason and Rebellion slept in flaunting sin, and he cast at his opponents the facts of an unlicensed march of men headed by a man named Grant. That march had been incitement to revolution. It was an overt act.

Mr. Gilder was termed a fool, and he demanded an apology. Thereupon his



gold-rimmed spectacles were knocked off his nose and in return he dislodged a member's false teeth. After which the Speaker spoke and several members, including Mr. Gilder, walked out of the House.

The country was secretly pleased with its representatives, although the leading articles in the Press affected concern for such lack of senatorial dignity. But the Press was now further concerned with the man named Grant. All at once that sorry scramble became an incipient rebellion nipped in the bud.

The mysterious man named Grant became a national figure, if menacing a little, and the spectre of Lenin lay over the land. Where was the man Grant ?

Where was he who had stalked through the constituency of Nether Overtoun hawking the claims of the now justly suspected McGuffie ? The plot was revealed and the man unmasked—but where was the man ? Had submarines lain in the Firth of Clyde to convey him back to his masters of the Ogpu—or is it the Cheka ? Was he now in London perhaps, in a luxurious flat, disguised ; suave, smiling, and sinister, using lovely dancers as his tools and holding



statesmen's relatives in pawn? Where was the man?

The man was at home, taking little jaunts about the neighbourhood with his alleged sister. Being single-minded, he bought no other paper than his paternal *Spear* and was meantime innocent of the hue and cry for him, for the *Spear* was only indulging in the vaguest generalities about the revolutionary scare. The *Spear* had its own scare.

It was suspect.

The *Spear* had sown the wind that carried Grant's name abroad and was now reaping the dubious benefits. These consisted largely of the transparent innuendoes of its contemporaries, more galling as they could not immediately be answered. Who could have foreseen that a talkative mountebank would shake two nations? Sir Frederick Saltire put trunk calls through from Fleet Street thrice daily.

Where now Sir William Wallace and the League of Nations! But a tiny fraction of the populace had heard the orator, and none now would take his words on trust. A dead man and a dead league!—puerile camouflage for the grim business of slaughter, petty subterfuge against the day of blood.

The man Grant had paced his lupine way through the dim alleys of the city, casting the seeds of fratricide around; the ignorant and vicious of the inhabitants had been fertile ground for the poison; they had listened, intent, for the sign of insurrection. Breathlessly they had listened, hungry for rapine and ruin, while the ghastly menace of Bolshevism had overshadowed the land. Poor dupes of the glib-tongued schemer, of the lurking foul reborn Marat. Poor dupes. Pale voiceless units in a thronging world, ready, like lambs, to be led to the slaughter; waiting for a day of wonder and a day of dreams, like the Seventh-day Adventists.

And where was the man Grant?

The people of Great Britain wondered.

For a time the editor of the *Spear* wondered also. Mr. Rattray discovered that Grant was gone.

Had the *Spear* boldly stated the details of Grant's doctrines during the election it would have saved itself future trouble. Its reticence regarding Grant's unusual views, its accentuation of the need for New Methods of Government, had left it helpless before the charge of promoting Bolshevism.

To implement his contract Grant had dutifully sent in some articles, promising more soon. The editor now removed these from the file and read them, later putting a trunk call through to Sir Frederick. After that he breathed deeply and scribbled tentatively upon a pad.

THE TRUE  
GRANT  
REVEALED

IS  
GRANT  
A  
BOLSHIE ?

BOLSHEVIST  
' PLOT '  
THE TRUTH  
AT LAST

" I've been having a chin with the old man," he said petulantly.

" Oh ? " said his assistant nervously.

" About this Grant." The editor chose a cigarette and gazed at the other with lacklustre eyes. " We've got to say something. We made a mistake in keeping out yon stuff about the League of Nations. We never

know what a thing will lead to. I wish we'd put it in. This Grant business will make our readers suspicious. You know how the Glasgow people resent being thought Bolshevik. They aren't, and their trade's suffering. And you know Sir Frederick! However, he could have been worse . . .

"If we keep silent everyone will think we're supporting a dangerous communist. We can't keep silent. We can only reveal what he did say—this League of Nations stuff, which isn't perhaps so harmful after all, though why this beggar should be so insistent on Scotland having a seat at that assembly of old women gets me.

"These are Grant's articles. It's a mercy they weren't destroyed. They're harmless enough—apparently a crystallization of his speeches. We'll publish them. We're saved from the charge of Bolshevism, anyway. He says a mouthful about Sir William Wallace in his first, a whole mouthful. And he has some complimentary things about McGuffie, that Nether Overtoun chap, you know. Of course, we'll erase that bit. If I could get Grant into touch with the Caledonian League we could breathe easy. We'll print the first article on Wednesday. We'll

splash the announcement first. We'll make it a patriotic number. Tell Munro McKay to send in a column article about Bannockburn. See if there are any doubtful portraits of Mary Queen of Scots and ask Cattnach to write something to prove their authenticity. Get up some stunt about a bridge between Bute and Arran or Mull and Islay. You know.

"We'll make a splash. We must restore public confidence. We'll discard the Political Regenerator idea—at least to some extent. We'll make Grant out to be a sort of wandering saint, a lay monk, poor and simple-minded; a Man with a Message. We'll state that the silence of the *Spear* was intentional, to draw our opponents out. They talked, you'll understand, while we listened with concealed contempt and amusement. We waited till it suited us to speak, you understand."

"Quite."

"That's good. And I hope things turn out for the best. But a patriotic number is the best way out."

"I wonder," said the assistant thoughtfully, "how a series on Notorious Scottish Women would go."



"How Notorious Scottish Women?" demanded the chief with interest.

"Most people are interested in moral laxity," proceeded the other with enthusiasm. "We could get a good series from history. I've been looking things up. One Scottish king married his mistress. Another king had three lady friends whose names gave rise to an interesting rhyme, although it might be too suggestive to print. Then there was Clementina Walkinshaw, Prince Charlie's friend. King Louis made her a countess . . . Countess of Albatross, or something."

"She would be thick-skinned," said the editor, nodding.

"And there was Madeleine Smith, who was supposed to poison her French lover. There's a whole lot of them."

"It wouldn't do," said the editor, after thought. "No one likes his faults brought home to him. A series of Fickle French Females or Loose Latvian Ladies might do, but we can't tell Scotch people about Notorious Scottish Women. What's the use in asking for trouble? But you could think out something about Homely Highland Heroes—chaps who have tramped thirty

miles through snow to deliver the mail. Something like that."

"I sometimes wish," remarked the other in an unusual burst of audible yearning, "that I was tramping in the snow through Ludgate Circus."

Mr. Rattray called and found Grant out.

"Your brother is becoming a tremendous big noise," he assured Flora. "He'll soon be getting a knighthood."

"Will he?" she said anxiously. "I hope not."

"Ah, Miss Grant, the devil's good to his ain weans. May I stay for a little? I walked, and it's hot."

"But a knighthood——" said Flora helplessly, taking his hat from him. "Will you have tea? A knighthood."

"Why not?" replied the young man easily as he settled himself in the best chair in the kitchen. "Sir Dougal McGugan is a knight."

Flora said dispassionately, "Well, I don't know who is or isn't, but I think John would be best to refuse it."

"Yes, when he's offered it. But the affair's a joke, really." He laughed softly,

finding some amusement in her resentful glance. "I think your brother is greater than you realize."

"I'm only realizing how great he is," she answered soberly.

"He has a flair for politics. He should stand for Parliament. You'll maybe entertain at Downing Street yet."

"I seem to be entertaining at this moment," she said dryly. "What's the joke, Mr. Rattray?"

"Life's a joke," he responded cheerfully.

"Is it?"

"I believe that if he wanted, your brother could get anything he wished just now. A few weeks ago he was unknown, and now the whole country's talking about him."

"That means," said Flora thoughtfully, "that he'll make a pile of money."

"You'll be good for a fur coat," he assured her.

Flora gave Rattray a cup of tea in his hand and biscuits.

"When will Mr. Grant be in?"

"My brother's at the tailor's. He's getting some clothes."

Rattray grinned. "He'll be unrecognizable soon."

"I like to see him well dressed," she answered seriously.

"It's a loss to the picturesque, all the same. He'll lose his following. You can't be a preaching friar and wear spats." Observing her puzzled expression he added: "Mr. Grant's whole reputation rests on his rags. His rags, and his constant appearances in public. The British public is the most intelligent, best educated, and most cultured in existence. Sir Frederick insists on that. But it has a senile memory."

"Do you mean——?"

"It's a wee bit careless, that's all."

"John's always talking," she said, and suppressed a sigh.

He remarked that it was a sign of health, and departed with an assurance that he would return soon to learn Grant's latest intentions.

At their next meeting Grant explained awkwardly that he and his sister proposed taking a holiday. She had complained of being unwell. Mr. Rattray listened urbanely. "I thought she looked run down," he remarked.

"I didn't notice it myself," Grant said anxiously. "But a change may do her good. We're going away, anyway."

"Where to?"

"A wee quiet place," Flora interposed.

"Yes, but where?" Mr. Rattray insisted, with a vivid recollection of their previous disappearance.

"We don't know," she said quickly. "It's for a complete change. We'll see when we get to the station."

"That's Flora's whim," Grant explained.

Mr. Rattray declared that it was a very intelligent whim. He smiled frankly at the girl, who averted her glance from his.

"How long are you going to be away?"

"About three weeks, we think."

"That should be long enough to suit Miss Grant, I suppose."

Mr. Rattray reported that the lay monk had departed for a considerable stay, and his superiors were well pleased. The *Spear* had cleared itself from the imputation of Communism and was willing to let Mr. Grant descend into oblivion.

"Is there any reason for his destination being kept a secret?" One never knew what Mr. Grant might do next.

"If there is a reason," Mr. Rattray said serenely, "Grant is quite ignorant of it."



In a little seaside village Flora felt that Grant had now become her own exclusive care. He was away from noise and ambition. Little eager thoughts formed in her mind. The coast or the country offered the sequestered life. She would like, she thought, to live for ever, season in and season out, in some of the quiet half-sleeping places to which she and Grant were daily tramping, tending the garden, keeping poultry . . .

Quite frankly she admitted her treason. She had deduced sufficient from Rattray's chance remarks to guide her own purposes. For Grant's peculiar views she did not care a fig. Yet they were part of himself, and as she and Grant trudged by the seashore he would sometimes make a remark about them and she would feel compunction. She knew all about Judas.

His anger, were he to understand her object in coming to this isolated place, would be past all reason. It would shatter their friendship, she guessed. But she was willing to risk that. It was sufficient to her that she liked him. Beyond that her reasoning declined to go. All his creeds and beliefs were anathema to her, for she

was sure that any further public move of his would help to dissolve their friendship. The girl was determined that it would not be dissolved. But she was frank with herself. She confessed her treason, not suspecting her selfishness.

They went for walks together. The leaves were beginning to fall and each day held a new diversity. Misty mornings in which the sun looked like a clot of blood floating in milk passed into afternoons of serene pale skies and warming sunshine. In the evenings gloaming came earlier, in the track of a flaming sunset.

Together they went out, walking swiftly. They walked on the tree-lined roads, crushing the leaves that had swirled into heaps and talking slightly. Neither felt any incentive to speech, for Grant was obsessed by his cause and Flora was obsessed by Grant.

To Flora, the slight daily happenings of life became fraught with significant delight. Going with Grant to enjoy a certain view; going with Grant to see a ruined castle; going with Grant to the nearest station for the *Spear*—these little walks were things of great moment to be enjoyed with epi-

curean relish, for she knew too well that gladness passes.

She cared least for the station jaunt—a walk of three miles which brought them up against civilization and railway bookstalls and copies of the *Spear*. She herself would purchase a detective story there, or a magazine devoted to housekeeping and furnishing, evincing a lively interest in arrivals off the train.

“Look!” she exclaimed once, and laughed out loud. “See what has fallen off a flitting!”

A very fat little man, accompanied by two others and a young woman, was advancing slowly up the platform. People hovered curiously about, and as the party approached a camera clicked.

The fat little man was attired in a kilt of dazzling tartan, and because of his girth and lack of stature it resembled a stiff pleated frill. From beneath it two thin knobbly knees projected and retired as he walked. He was splay-footed, and his feet rose and descended with unhurried deliberation. The little fat man wore a crotaldyed doublet, an outsize Balmoral bonnet on which was pinned a large sprig of heather,

black-and-white checked hose, and a genial smile. In his right hand he held a six-foot cromag.

As he neared where Grant and Flora stood he stopped. He commenced speaking to his friends, who appeared to enjoy his remarks greatly, laughing aloud, and occasionally glancing at the increasing crowd.

"That's the first real Scutchman I've seen since I came over," declared a young lady delightedly. "I'll say he is a real Highlander. A real Scutch Highlander."

All at once the little fat man appeared to notice the aroused public interest. Looking around with a great beaming smile upon his fat beaming face, he embraced everyone with a cheerful wave of the hand and said:

"Hooch-aye."

When he said this everyone was pleased, and several people clapped their hands. Someone cried: "Good old Dougie!" and the young American lady expressed her delight in having had the fortune to see a representative Scutchman.

"Hooch-aye," repeated the little man. "Hoots-toots. Mon, but I'm the prood, prood man this day. Weel, weel, sae here

we are!" He jerked his head to the side, resting one hand upon hip. "Yin o' the bonniest wee placies in the haill o' Scoatland."

There was more clapping.

"Hooch-aye," he continued without pause. "I've mony a time been here. Mony a time. I canny gie ye a speech, ma frien's, for I'm jist here for a wee bittie holiday. But ye can a' come and hear me soon in Glesca, and mon! but I'll gie ye a' value for your saxpences."

"Isn't he a nice little man," said the young American lady breathlessly.

"Ye maun ken, my frien's, that this train was twenty minutes late. I lost a saxpence on the line last year and I askit the driver tae stop for a wee till I could dae a bittie speirin' for it. Hoots-toots."

Another camera clicked.

"Ah weel, I'll awa' and see if my frien's here can gie me a wee tastie o' whuskey. Mon, mon! It's got a grand taste the whuskey, if it didnae run awa' sae muckle wi' the saxpences.

"And mind this," continued the little fat man, pointing an adjuring finger and assuming a solemn and admonitory mien,



“dinna forget your mithers. Never forget your auld grey-heidit mithers in their wee cosy but-and-bens aside the heather, ahint the bens, fornenst the loch, waiting for the wanderer’s return. Waiting for your return, wi’ the dear auld Scoatch purple heather growin’ on the moor and the bonnie Scoatch thistle growin’ jist aside it.” He dashed a tear from his eye. “Your auld grey-heidit mithers. Hooch-aye. Hoots.”

With another genial wave of the hand he made his measured exit from the station, surrounded by his admirers, to a luxurious motor-car.

“Who is that fat bag of creesh?” said Grant savagely. “Who is that man who mocks the most sacred memories of men? Who is he?”

“That is Sir Dougal McGugan, the comedian,” explained a young man beside him.

“The hypocritical hash.”

“He’s an asset to the country,” said the young man chidingly. “We should respect success.”

“Success!” exclaimed Grant, glooming. “Did you hear him? Did you listen to him?”

"What about it. He was merely pawky and whimsical. Good God! you don't object to a Scotsman being pawky and whimsical. It's our birthright. Our greatest men are pawky and whimsical."

"He's awful fat," Flora observed thoughtfully.

"Surprising you don't know him," continued the young man, "for the whole world knows Sir Dougie."

"I've heard of him," said Flora pleasantly, "but I never saw him before and I don't know anything about him."

The young man was glad to be of help to Flora. "He got his knighthood last year. You'll remember the International Conference in Paris when each country sent a representative man to discuss the progress of humanity?" The young man seemed surprised by their blank looks. "England sent Sir Henry Severing, the explorer. Ireland sent O'Hagan, the poet. Italy sent Luzzi, the airman-sculptor, France, the statesman Savory. Germany sent Kirchner, the philosopher. And Scotland sent Sir Dougie."

"Scotland sent Sir Dougie."

"And he got his knighthood when he returned. He entertained the other dele-

gates to a song-and-patter every night. That was our contribution to contemporary effort."

"Sir Dougal McGugan."

"Yes; Sir Dougal McGugan. You'll remember his famous joke about the flowers he grew on his father's grave and the price he got for them at the cemetery gate? But the Conference at Paris really consolidated his fame. It made him. That friendly international rivalry is healthy, I think. I was in Paris then—there were cheap tours going—and visited the photographic exhibition held in connection with the Conference."

"Did you?"

"Yes; you know, achievements each country was proud of. There were some jolly good things, too," he added reminiscently. "Sweden, I remember, had plans and views of the Stockholm Town Hall; Austria of workers' housing schemes; the Shannon scheme for Ireland. England, a cathedral. Italy on the reclamation of waste land. The Scottish exhibits were considered very original, I remember."

"What were they?"

"A photograph of the new Rugby pitch

at Murrayfield and one of the Lions' Den in Corstorphine Zoo."

"Do you play Rugby?" Flora demanded, interested.

"I only play the fool," confessed the young man.

"You're no' the only one," she said sympathetically.

"Well, we've been pleased to meet you," Grant interrupted coldly. "Good morning."

"You shouldn't encourage strangers," he said admonishingly to the girl. "You never can tell people's characters."

"Ah, g'on. There was no harm in him."

"I don't trust men who go about alone," he said gravely.

"No! That wasn't one of *your* vices, was it?"

"I wasn't alone," Grant said equably. "I had my cause."

"Well," she answered thoughtlessly, "that's getting the go-by now, isn't it?"

The light remark startled and left him serious. Indeed, for a fortnight the *Spear* had been silent about the cause. And, he thought with quick compunction, for two whole days—yesterday and the day before

—the cause had lain lightly on himself. He was stung by self-reproach, and wondered in quick fear if the *Spear's* indifference or the contiguity of Flora was responsible for his backsliding. He was unhappy all forenoon because of it and excused himself to Flora after lunch, retiring to his own room to meditate in loneliness on the great task to which he had dedicated himself, that task of inculcating peace and happiness to which he had thirled himself and which he had begun to neglect.

That afternoon was warm. He threw himself on his bed, breathing heavily, and contemplating the shimmering sea with troubled eyes. Desperate hot-headed ideas entered and deserted his mind; he saw the weary, the miserables of the world stretching forth suppliant arms to him, beseeching his succour in his charity. He was overthrowing conferences of fat low-browed financiers. He was stopping wars with the downward movement of a negative hand. He had six dictators bound before him; with his own right hand he slew them one by one.

The sea had faded from his outward vision. New secret vistas were forming in



his secret mind. He was absorbed in them, lying in spread quiescence before the darkly gleaming hosts of dormant thought. He saw high crags on whose bleak tops gaunt trees lay bent against a nightmare desolate sky. He explored dim vaults where horrid things scurried menacingly towards him. And he saw many people, destitute of money, starved of food and bereft of sense, who hovered around and over him until, forming into one terrifying and destructive mass, they lay upon him, crushing him into a slime of bitter death.

## III

Then he was standing on a gentle slope, gazing down to a river. The river ran between two lines of hills, and it came from afar and disappeared afar, and in all its course there was no visible habitation of any kind. There were indeed *larachs*—remnants or sites of houses—and around them grew perhaps a bour tree or an ash, or a mingling of currant bushes and nettles. But there was no smoke, no sound. In the river were fish, and in the sky shone the sun. And there was a silence all around.

As he gazed upon that scene great fear

came upon him, for he feared that he was the last living creature on earth. He wondered then if God had died; and if so, were he immortal, and would he not succeed in dying? And he was terrified by the thought, and staggered in a great agony of mind, and it was then that he saw a man standing beside him.

The man was of great breadth and stature. His features were strong, of an open cast; he was bearded, and his severe expression was softened by the humour in his eyes. On his head was a pointed helmet, and he wore a doublet made of many small rings of metal over which was a long vestment fastened at the waist by a belt. From one shoulder hung a great two-handled sword. This man gazed at him silently, but with no unfriendliness in his eyes. Indeed, there was a satisfaction in them that was comforting. And at last Grant summoned sufficient of his composure to inquire the stranger's name.

The giant regarded him gravely and answered: "Do you not know?" And the other shook his head.

Then the stranger ignored him, regarding the desolation of the scene. He stood in

an attitude that was easy and commanding, with his head held very high and his fingers seldom far from the dagger at his wrist.

The smaller man would have spoken and was anxious to speak. A sense of awe forbade him, and it was after a little time that the stranger, still regarding the silent valley, said :

“ I have seen glens that in the flush of morning shone in my eyes as scenes of unbelief. The mists hung quietly upon their slopes ; their trees were like a dark green shaken robe. There were swift routing burns all fat with fish, brown hopeful pools to hold you by the day—how brown the mountain burns are in the valleys ! I knew them well, for pleasant memories last.

“ There were broad fields where the good grain grew tall, and houses happy with the laugh of men. There were green meadows where we practised falls or gathered for the archery and the swordplay. In Clydesdale nor in Kyle nor Cunningham never a man in all the land could beat me.”

The stranger smiled and was silent ; for a little time. And then he turned to the other, saying with great kindness :

“ You mind when there was darkness

round your bed, and you lay stretched and wondering in great pain? I walked most quietly lest I'd scare the lassies, and came to you and spoke. And man, you stared! Yon was the night I made you my inheritor, heir of my manhood and of nothing more. I would not give you more if I could do it. Manhood's enough—all else not worth a docken.

“Hai! I shall show you some of the old haunts where I stravaiged before King Alexander had broke his neck or Edward broke his oath; where there was rowth of sport and smiling lassies, and laughter fit to crack the very sky. Great laughter that was richer than red gold, for laughter is the token of red blood.”

As he spoke there was a difference, perceptibly. At first quite imperceptible, and then—hills sped behind them, rushing burns sped by. They were in a tumult of height and glen. They were aware of the absence of women and men. Moons died in silver breath, suns rose in blood. The haar and the mist and the heat succeeded each. There was the music of rills and the roar of flood, and the gentle lapping of waves on sanded beach.

The mountains passing so rapid across the moon left their faint outlines, so that the white arc poised in the fast succeeding breathless noon like some weird bird upon a spectral barque. Even the trees that passed in soundless haste, touched by the lunar brightness, ere that sped, knew that the sun upon their tops had traced a dye that lapped all the moonbeams red.

So swift ! And as the dawns and gloamings mingled in dizzying disarray all things grew mirk, save where a slip of moon was dimly singled in the blue velvet heaven like a dirk.

And now the earth was still, but these strange twain travelled instead ; they travelled hoolet-like. Past windy heich, biold howe and shady shaw ; past cleuch and scaur and craig and hope and haugh. Out over loch and over linn and dyke ; past beikit places and places begrutten with rain ; by sandy bents where the sea-gulls cried their dule ; by stream-paved alleys where the heron swept, and where the rooks hearkened their psalms for school, and where the gled swooped like a death adept.

Past scarred and crusted hills that swept from heaven in lava-like formation, and



past bens ; they, having seen their splendid sinews riven, had cast their boulders wearily in the glens. The sky grew lighter and the eagle yelped from its plateau to where the stag was couched, to the ferned bourocks where the vixen whelped her innocent young, and where the muircock crouched.

Dawn from her eyes withdrew her covering hands, and the earth was flushed with splendour all at once. From the sun's keep a dozen flashing bands scorched the pale saffron sky with radiance.

Now they were standing in a monstrous place of buildings and long streets and ghastly roar. Noise rose from it to the upper planes of space like the sea's ceaseless menace on the shore. A million chimneys cast a tantalizing veil to the sun beside a thousand spires. The spires lift tapered fingers in a rising protest against one hundred thousand fires. Through the proud canyons of the mighty city countless machines passed, heedlessly absorbed. Hastening crowds pressed onwards, marching down the path of humanity, all dully orb'd.

A river rolled amidst it all and borrowed a sombre spirit from the stony heights.

These, man-erected, many-windowed, sorrowed through hours of light to hours of twinkling lights. (The smooth suave faces of those precipices are but an icy mask, for, deep within, the fevered heat of mankind never ceases, and the commerce of nations is soiled and sealed in sin.)

The city bore a look of aged assurance like one that has surmounted many woes, and having suffered much in self-endurance consolidates with frigid self-repose. She bore that look amid all mad emprise, somewhat aloof and slightly cynical—the cool reserve in the weary gambler's eyes, the flavouring of fun, and the taste of gall.

In spite of many elements of languor the roar did not abate and did not die. Noise is what desperation in its anger uses to hide the truth from other eye. Afar, in mesh-like shape, the city threw her pulsing suburbs from unsteady grasp; a frightening panorama to the view, of street and rotting slum and avenue.

There were sweet-scented haunts where all the flowers that summer could produce grew bright and gay. And there were darker places where the hours pass in a darker mood in darker play. But these things are

accepted, for the dues demanded of existence is a toll that sometimes takes the body, if it choose, and sometimes is contented with the soul.

Withal, there was the constant sound of laughter, that deep and worldly laughter of the north that strangers deny as merriment, searching after shrill cachinnations that come never forth. That laughter! bitter now and with the spasm of qualm and helplessness, the present fears that there is but an imperceptible chasm between the peaks of laughter and of tears.

Sometimes the rain's smart crystal feet pattered on tenement and street. Sometimes the gilded sun passed through in brassy triumph of review. At night, from houses, shops, and cars, light flared upon each thoroughfare as though a host from upper air had trailed and left a net of stars.

This cold vast city with its wanrife air, standing imperially by the river, unvexed to all appearance by the stare of enemy or friend, nor caring ever for all her sons and their matriolatry; bearing in her blood the rottenness of decay and in her bones the brittleness of neglect, stared vacantly to

the oncoming day with outward pose all circumspect.

“I would not know it but for the muckle kirk. Wishart’s castle was bye and the prebendries where Anthony quartered his men. And down there—there!—we met the English lads in a bloody fracas. Anthony took his cope and his sainted banners and ran, rowting to those who cared to hear how Saint Cuthbert and Saint John were sweirt to help him. The Durham lads they were that quartered here. Some of them lacked the time to make for home.”

He gazed around him with the quiet glance of one who is not strange nor sympathetic. People were passing by, but unaware of him and his companion they passed on.

“I could not bear the life that these creatures bear. They battle without strife in a mockery of air. They are pale and weak, they are dwarfed and speak with nameless fear. I was not meant to hear this servile talk. I wielded a spear before I could walk. These puny whittericks that cluster like rooks in tunnelled prisons and darkened neuks—what do they know! Do they know that herring swim in the sea and that the capercaillie and eagle are free, as

free to-day as days ago? There are too many doubts in the minds of these men. The mind of man should be an untroubled mind. It should be clear as the wind, as clear as the wind in the glen.

“In my time our lot was cut and clear. It was of strength we thought and the slaughter of fear. We judged a man by his depth of chest, not so muckle as how he dressed. Was he a leal man, straight and tall?—that was all.

“We had a measure and we kept by it. We asked for courtesy and kindliness. We thought that honour and truth and courage were fit companions for a man—that was the dress. Lithe, sturdy men, and not cooped in duress in all these curious jails—we asked no more. If you can better that, then better it.

“Until old Edward broke into the land ours was a happy land. We tilled the soil and fished and hunted in our hours from toil, and did what sensible men can understand. We did not live and die in rickles of stones without the sight of grass from year to year. We had blood and plenty of it around our bones. Nothing feared us and we had no one to fear.



“ I like the hills and fields and the smell of earth. I like the rain and the sun and the wind and snow. These are the likings man should inherit at birth. If he inherits them still I do not know. There is room enough in the valleys—strange to me so many folk are cooped in a place like this. Once there was honour given to husbandry, and the tillage of fields was not considered amiss. There was a triumph in the growth of wheat in a stony place where it had failed before. Then was the moment to feel a good conceit, with a heavy harvest bound for the granary door ! The lowing of bestial and the bleating of sheep gives greater pleasure to man than the trumpets of war. Man, I know, came into the world to reap. I know he should do what he was intended for.

“ Yon mighty spaces without habitation for man’s and woman’s habitation wait. There is a country-side and there is a nation, and nothing done is ever done too late. I would achieve a great prosperity, not reckoning on silver but on wit. I have the right to make this nation see. I have immortal right—I died for it.

“ I would destroy all cities and would

build ; build in green vacant places of the soil. I would have all the desolation tilled ; I would have gardens flourish for their toil. These donjons I would level to their bed, and on their sites erect a cattle-shed.

“ Our captain Christ was mothered in a stable, first grat at sound of the scrape of an ass’s hoof. He would be pleased to see, as He is able, in every Scottish mile a stable roof. He would be pleased to see the smoke arise from many countless cottages, and see with His own valiant and impatient eyes beside each house the ash and the elder tree.

“ Our Father in Heaven who knows His own intents would be surprised, I dare say, if He saw my people urged by new-found sentiments spread from their dens by old unspoken law. To the Seigneur at first they would look curious—as ants, deserting all their dark estate ; pressing to every airt in passage furious, haste and determination in their gait.

“ What little claim I have I long forswore. It was a claim on memory, which fades. In my short day, short joys, long wrongs I bore ; both are forgot, my way is in the shades. I do not ask remembrance

for the past. Others have suffered since and loved and bled. Gratitude for devotion cannot last. Memory only remains with the patient dead.

“But I can remember yet when I was borne forth on the cart to my own dark calvary. The curious crowds would scarce concede me room, though little I cared, for my thoughts were in Elderslie. I could remember my father and mother sitting there in the little tower, in the chamber of deas; the song of the mavis, and the black-bird flitting among the woods, and the yellow whin on the leas. And I told myself while my heart was fit to break that the land which bore me suffered a greater pain. That what I did was done for Scotland’s sake; if it were needful I would do it again. I thought of the stalwart lads as yet unborn, and the smiling girls to be fit as mother and wife. Regret for myself I was content to scorn—against the hopes of my country, what was a life!

“Then I died smiling gladly at the taunts and the tears of they who watched, and as I fled into those guarded and one-portalled haunts I joyed exultantly that I was dead. I died in vain. I might have drunk and

lusted like many men who pass a thoughtless day. I handed down a cause to those I trusted. They have betrayed me in my extremity.

“This is no day for battle or for anger. It is no day for blood or treachery. Nor for the men who cling to sloth and languor, nor for the men of lies and perjury. This is the hour to build, the hour to pray. Impatience let there be, and strong belief. There is danger in another hour’s delay, with every minute of that hour a thief.

“Build! Build a beacon that to all the nations will be a ray of spiritual light. Delve, in your hearts, and in your excavations bring forth neglected riches into sight. Build mighty fleets, all armed and strongly manned—fit for the fishing; trench and drain morasses. Dig great canals, plant forests, and demand acknowledgment from every hour that passes. Raise mighty schools of learning that will teach the satisfaction of life and the joy of health. Give to the sick the hospital and the leitch. Take from the earth its gladly given wealth.

“I see a beautiful world allowed to rot, dying for want of purpose; God is its lender. In these great vassalages there is not grati-

tude commensurate to His splendour. I see the sun arise and the moon arise, and the seasons and the years advance and go. We are equipped with the weapons of enterprise. We are given a world, and we make it a world of woe.

“But I am one of the dead!—I have no voice. Your words are mine, your actions are your own. There is in man a will to love and rejoice, and an equal will for misery and moan. Give them their choice, give them their final choice of the timorous present or the glad unknown. I made my choice and did not doubt the part. I signed it with the life-blood of my heart.”

Grant was seated by the window when Flora entered his room, his chin rested on his hand, his eyes fixed sombrely on the sea. He stared at her for a moment, silently, without recognition. She grew timid under that emotionless gaze, fearing, as she sometimes did, that she was a perfect stranger to him, and thought of withdrawing. But as she turned to go he said:

“It’s you, Flora.”

“Had you a headache?” she ventured.

“I had a dream.” He arose and strode



heavily across the room. Without purpose, for he returned at once to the window and the sight of the sea.

"I had a dream," he repeated. She questioned him without speech and he answered: "It was a reproach.

"Flora," he added suddenly, "there is too much misery and sin and disease in this world . . . far too much for a man to think of. I shall go mad, I think."

"We've just got to fight for ourselves——"

"No, no. That's an animal's choice. Forgive me, Flora. I have seen too much. And I felt that I suffered it all myself."

"It's no use," she said with weary cynicism. "A lot others would worry for you."

"God forgive me for my helplessness. But I vow I'll make this country tremble." The languor vanished from his voice. "I've had a dream."

"Be careful——"

"That's coward's talk," he said contemptuously. "It was a warning. I'm sick of spoon-fed comfort, sick of hypocrisy. Sick of sentimentality. Oh, Flora, I'd sell my soul to Satan to make a thousand people happy . . . the mothers whose babies are

born blind from disease, the fathers who see their children starving of hunger and cold, the daughters who are forced to a life of shame.

"If no one else will do it, I shall. I'll tramp the country from end to end. I'll sweep poverty before me like a wind. I'll do it alone, for none will help me . . . not even you. I'll make this country choose between Sir William Wallace and Sir Dougal McGugan."

She felt that he was receding from her. And desperately as she wished to say something comforting, she could not bring herself to do so, hating his chosen beliefs with sullen resentment. "Man, you're mad," she said.

"Oh, I know," he said slowly. "I've been told so. I sometimes wonder if I'm mad and everyone else is sane. Or am I sane and the whole world mad? But a madman can do sane things. And I've got my rebuke, Flora. And I'm going to do what I've been told to do. If you would help me!"

She was by him at once, and the better to see his despondent face, knelt on her knees beside him.

"You want to change things terribly, John.

"John, there was only one other man I've heard of who tried to do things like that. And the jailers copped him.

"Have you come back?" she demanded, with terror and awful anticipation in her eyes.

"You want to change things. It was only lately . . . oh, tell me quick, have you come back?"

She continued in a hurried gabbling voice :  
"I used to be afraid of hell. But not now, and that's so queer. Listen," she cried appealingly, "I'm frightened. It's only now. But I'm frightened. For you want to change everything. For you get people following after you in crowds. For you were poor and didn't care. And I'm frightened."

Her upturned face was close to his. He saw how agitated she was, and how her body shook in convulsive sympathy. "For are you Christ?" she almost screamed, and gazing down at her now prostrate body he shuddered with horror at the unexpected revelation of a tormented mind and soul.

## PART FIVE

### I

ACTING upon the sharp reminder of his dream, Grant stravaiged the country.

For three weeks he travelled, speaking in the Fife fringe towns, Angus, and the Mearns. He did not neglect the villages, and was willing to make a speech to one individual. Travelling by 'bus, he lodged in small and humble houses.

He had sent a note to the Editor of the *Spear*, announcing the start of his campaign at Stirling, a town with happy associations with Sir William Wallace. He delivered his speech there on a Saturday afternoon when the town was busy with folk from the surrounding districts, and the *Spear's* correspondent was there to hear. Grant's speech concerned land settlement.

So much trouble had they encountered through Grant that the *Spear's* people thought best to ignore him.

His fluency impressed his rural audiences,

but not so much as did his knowledge of the Bible. When he cried :

“ ‘ And they shall build houses, and inhabit them ; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

“ ‘ They shall not build, and another inhabit ; they shall not plant, and another eat ; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands,’ ” the cottars were pleased. They considered him a very intelligent man, and respected his well-groomed appearance. They liked his unassuming manner and were certain they had read about him somewhere. At any rate, he would be a subject for speculation during the winter nights.

Sometimes his humble host declined to charge him for his night's lodging, and often he was given his tea for nothing. He would accept without humility, considering those gifts as tributes to the man whose memory he adored.

Almost he became fashionable. The Princess de Valais, who had leased the Drumcharrie shootings for twenty-nine years, heard that he was in the adjacent village, whisked him to the castle and presented



him like a prize dog to her guests, the Marchioness of Hadahead, Lady Jean Spreull, Comte de Chièvres, and Cavaliere Caroletti. Grant accepted them gravely and spoke in timely style of the necessity for international amity. He was considered a delightful creature, especially by the Comte de Chièvres, whose direct ancestor had fought at the Battle of Baugé, and the Marchioness of Hadahead mentioned him with considerable praise in her society notes.

At Blackguardie, fifteen miles farther on, he was overheard by Mr. Sinclair, the local landowner. Mr. Sinclair was laird of Blackguardie Castle, long the seat of the Guardie family, and had achieved some fame for his efforts to connect himself with the Sinclairs, princes of Orkney, a pursuit which finally brought him up against one Donald Mac-no-kerd or Mac-an-tinkler, a vagrant who was hanged in 1746 at Inveraray for stealing a piebald pony, two craigcloths, and a copy of the *Caledonian Mercury* from Campbell of Duisk.

These genealogical trails had bred a taste for history in the millionaire-grocer. And a reference by Grant to the surname Wallace as being the brightest in the country's

history was accepted by Mr. Sinclair as a gratifying personal tribute. His mother's name had been Wallace. Mr. Sinclair therefore invited Grant to the castle, placing his eccentric interest to the Wallace connection and not suspecting that it might be a recrudescent sympathy stirring in his tinker blood.

He led Grant into the great banqueting-hall, and seated before a mantelpiece carved with the words 'Gin Ye Gar Me Grue I Sall Gar Ye Greet' (the famous riposte uttered after the Battle of Carbery by the third Earl of Blackguardie when he struck Mary Queen of Scots on the face with his mail-clad fist) he gravely listened to Grant's exposition of the political situation. He did not say much, being disappointed by Grant's ignorance of Wallace's family history, and to be rid of him furnished him with an introductory letter to his friend Dr. Forbes-Gordon-Michie of Aberdeen, the celebrated historian, antiquarian, and philatelist.

Grant was heartened by his visits to the castles of Drumcharrie and Blackguardie. He was not ill-pleased at having disseminated his views among people of rank and property,

for his democracy was very vital. He would not exclude the rich from sharing the blessings of the message he had been called to deliver. There was hope, he knew, for publicans and sinners.

He said as much in the cottage where he asked for lodging that night, and the old woman who occupied it seemed to share his views. In her yaul days she had been maid at the castle with the last Guardies and had tender memories of the Dowager-Countess. Very thankfully she accepted a trifle from Grant, for her son had been unable to remit much from Canada, whither he had gone to search for work. She was eighty-four, and lived alone.

The orator enjoyed the cosy little rooms where he found his rest at nights. Tiny apartments—bunks, some of them—with tiny windows ; decorated with old-fashioned family photographs or subjects from Wilkie ; fresh clean curtains in the windows ; fresh clean blankets on the beds. At the little post offices he would despatch a postcard to Flora, for he found Flora frequently in his thoughts, and thanked Heaven for so providentially providing him with a sister.

At another cottage was a framed photo-

graph of a girl that reminded him strongly of Flora, and he bluntly asked the sitter's identity. The old man of the house led him to the doorway and pointing to a fat middle-aged woman putting out a washing explained that there was the original. She was his daughter—his only child in a sense—for his two sons had left the country in search of work.

This little house remained long in his memory because of the entertainment he received. The old man had been a piper in his youth and was still useful with the chanter. He introduced three old neighbours to Grant, and the five spent a cheerful evening. One told tales of the 'Wet' Review of 1881 at which his brother had caught a fatal chill. Another boasted of the progress his daughter's husband was making in Australia. Not to be outdone, the third triumphantly shook a letter in their faces and insisted on reading it aloud. It was from his son in Natal, suggesting that his nephews should arrange to go out there and he would endeavour to find them work.

Grant arrived in Aberdeen on a day when it glistened with sunshine and rain, and

passed directly to the statue of Wallace which dominates the gardens. Standing humbly before it, he said audibly: "I salute you. You are my captain." And he thought that the metal lips moved in answer.

Obtaining lodgings in a humble house near the Gallowgate, he wrote a long letter to Flora which concluded with an outburst of praise for the city, for the statue of Wallace had gladdened him.

But a city celebrated for its hospitality, fishing industry, and handsome girls had few distractions for one who cared little for fish or women, and to fill an afternoon he called upon Dr. Forbes-Gordon-Michie, believing it a point of honour to deliver his introduction.

The learned gentleman regarded Grant with embarrassed interest. He had read about him in the papers. When he discovered that his visitor had no favours to ask, he treated him as an equal.

Dr. Forbes-Gordon-Michie's brother-in-law, Sir Lewis Smith, was an honoured member of the Caledonian Trade Extension Outpost League, an organization founded four years previously to combat the prevailing trade depression. It was an optimistic



movement with an influential membership. Frequent references to it occurred in the daily Press, and there was general belief that something would come of its efforts, for the executive board held a banquet in the Regalia Hotel in Edinburgh twice yearly. At those dinners the most prominent speakers were the Rev. Adam Tullydaff, the eminent divine who acted as chaplain to the League ; Mr. Alan Gellatly, the novelist, author of *Over the Water*, *Swords for Prince Charlie*, *The Black Chief's Vow*, and many other works ; Dame Jemima Douglas-Brown, D.B.E. ; Admiral Starryshaw, V.C. ; Mr. Jake Simpson, the Labour M.P. who had been born above a stable and once was insultingly referred to by a political opponent as a dog in a manger ; Viscount Strathdoon, the magnate ; Viscount Glendoon, the magnate ; Viscount Inverdoon, the magnate ; and the Duke of Ross.

Newer additions were the Duchess di Sant' Anna, whose family title was conferred on a valet of the Old Pretender who had taken service with the Pope ; Mr. David Gib, a gentleman from a transatlantic republic, of Scots descent, who had built on a Highland islet a tower which he

called Castle Gib, and selecting servants only of his own surname frequently wrote to the Press asserting that this was a vital hour in the nation's history, but that the Clan Gib was organized; and Mr. John James Macindoe, a manufacturer of literary tastes, author of *Oor Modest Doric Muse*, *Canty Bit Clavers*, *Wee Couthy Rhymes* and *Humble Swatches o' Hamely Sang*. Known as the Caledonian Virgil, this gentleman had obtained a well-deserved fame wherever the Scots tongue was not spoken. It was of him that a celebrated London critic exclaimed: "He transcends Burns," and Sir Dougal McGugan once remarked that "If the fame o' oor puir bit kintry is kenned ony place abroad whaur oor gallant bit Hieland laddies are saving tae send siller hame tae keep their auld grey-heidit faithers and mithers in their wee bit white-washed hoosies on the hillside abin the loch, the credit gangs tae Jock Jimmy Macindoe wi' his bonny wee bit pawky ballads singin' o' daisies and mice and bonnie lassies, and tae masel'."

Spurred by recollection of the repatriated Duchess di Sant' Anna, Mr. John James Macindoe wrote to Don Ramon Eduardo

Stewart de Elvas y Gonzalez, the famous Spanish dramatist of Jacobite descent, addressing him as a brother of the pen, and requested a message of goodwill for the Caledonian Trade Extension Outpost League's efforts, receiving a courteous letter from the great man offering to help in any manner possible addressed 'Glasgow, Inglaterra,' and asking, 'But where or what is Scotland?'

Of this representative national association the Duke of Ross was the most notable. Of ancient lineage, exalted rank, and great possessions, the impressive personality of the Duke had gained public interest and curiosity. His age was three score and five and his patriotism was undoubted. He had shot lions and fought in the front-line trenches; he had married a great heiress and ruled a dominion. He owned a principality of land and reigned in five mansions; he kept seven cars and fifty servants and was over the ears in debt. Some of his titles dated to the time of the first King James; the latest peccadillo of his hard-bitten connections had been calendared but a month back. The Duke was a notable figure, inspiring that admiration and

dislike which is the tribute to the individualist.

It had been noted maliciously that his ducal peers of Badenoch and Formartine seemed cowed in that luciferean presence. And Sir Lewis Smith, a very great man among the wealthy merchants of his own class, almost cringed before his negligently commanding Grace.

Sir Lewis was a clever man with cultured tastes. He collected Venetian glass and had published a monograph on the art of George Jamesone. He had not been ashamed to admit his humble origin in a land where pretence is rampant, and had read Rousseau and Paine. But the Duke's certainty of poise was always too much for him.

The knight had unbounded faith in the League, and devoted considerable time to its activities. He was not averse to the sensational in pursuance of his aims, and when Dr. Forbes-Gordon-Michie informed him of Aberdeen's visitor he was seized by inspiration. Dr. Forbes-Gordon-Michie therefore took Grant to his relative's house, hoping in that way to be rid of him.

"I see by the papers that you're causing a pilleurichie, Mr. Grant," the knight said



jocosely. "What exactly are you wanting?"

"I want separate representation for Scotland in the League of Nations. I want certainty of pacifism. And latterly I've wanted a big scheme of land settlement."

"You don't want much," said the doctor dryly.

"You'll be a Communist, Mr. Grant? But those speeches . . ." said Sir Lewis bluntly. "I'm not in favour of tub-thumping. I prefer oratory from a platform."

"Show me the platform and I'll speak from it."

"And I don't admire you careering about the country."

"Christ careered about Galilee," said Grant quietly.

An instant reply, coupled with a recollection about Lord Braxfield, was on the doctor's tongue, but he checked the irreverent words. Instead he said: "Join a party, Mr. Grant."

"That's the country's curse."

"I've belonged to the same party all my life," said Sir Lewis. "So did my father before me."

"Knox, who founded the State religion of



Scotland, was a Catholic. So was Luther. Paul was a pagan, and Christ was reared in the principles of Jewry."

"These are old arguments."

"They are good ones. If we did what our fathers did——"

"I know!" said Sir Lewis. "We would still be painting our bodies. I know all that. But we must have security in this world. We have traditions and laws to maintain. If we change, as I suppose we must, we have to change slowly."

Grant's gaze hovered thoughtfully between the pleasant old knight and his shilpit little good-brother. "I like to think that men and women demand a lot from life. It is their due, and they should get it. I like to think," said Grant with increasing enthusiasm, "that they would live on the land if they got a chance. It's natural. It's human. It is a horrible thought that men are crushed in big cities like rats, until a day of warfare when they go forth to be slain."

"Men have lived in cities from very early times," interposed the doctor. "Some of the cities are being excavated in Chaldea at this moment. And I don't suppose that they were too peaceful in those days."

"It is not only a changed way of thought that is wanted. It is an altered habit of mind."

"You'll not alter the mind of man, Mr. Grant."

"I've altered the minds of hundreds," was the composed answer.

"You're a damned clever man," said Sir Lewis with a keen gaze. "You've read Carlyle, I dare say. Very picturesque, but I wouldn't like to live through one."

"You might not," said his relative mordantly.

"And I believe you led a mob of a queer kind, Mr. Grant. In Glasgow, where they're a queer kind at the best."

"They were harmless as fleas."

"Fleas bite best at a healthy body," observed the doctor.

"Happy people are never troublesome," retorted Grant. "Give a man a house and garden and he won't want to cut your throat."

"I'll guarantee," said the doctor blithely, "to give fifty men a house and garden, and forty-nine of them would stab me in the back to get my lawn-mower."

"Then we'll make the forty-nine like the fiftieth," replied Grant promptly.

"The fiftieth would assault me to my face——"

"Remember, Mr. Grant," said Sir Lewis soothingly, "that grievances should be ventilated in a constitutional manner. Those demonstrations are dangerous."

"I have the support of thousands who wish me well."

"Have you? Then, by God, if I had any say in the matter, I'd have you clapped in jail."

"Oh—martyrdom!" cried the doctor deprecatingly. "That's bad policy."

"Sir Lewis Smith," said Grant, "if you were asked to sacrifice everything, wealth, happiness, life, for your country's sake, would you do it?"

The merchant - knight said slowly: "There's a good deal of sentimentality in that question, Mr. Grant. And I'm not fond of sentimentality. But I might," he said abruptly.

"Your country is in peril."

"Of what?" said the doctor.

"Of decay."

"We hear a good deal of that," said Sir Lewis impatiently. "A lot of our people think they're serving their country by mis-

calling the English. It's a pity you never were in England. Have you? I like to see sympathy between Englishmen and Scots. I don't like petty patriotism. England is our good friend."

"I wish," replied Grant, "that Scotsmen were as wise as Englishmen. England is a nation. And England is going to be brought down in a crash of ruin—by Scotland."

"Aided by the Soviets? I said you'd land in jail."

"Aided by Scotland's trade losses, her unemployment, her apathy, her want of pride. These things are like disease. They are contagious. The canker of Scotland will spread south. England is in difficulties, but her stubborn pride will help her—would save her, but for us. Without a gun fired, without a word of anger or a raised hand, Scotland is going to smash England in the dust. She will bring England down with her.

"Think of England! great and powerful, with a great and sensible people . . . centuries of tremendous courage, cunning, and splendour. She has fought Scots, French, Spanish, Dutch, Russians, Germans. After each war she rose higher, confident, certain of her destiny. Now she will get the death-

blow, and the country that will deal it is as unconscious of that as herself; as innocent. Not one of England's foes managed what will be done through the lack of national pride in her neighbour. I think that's a solemn thought. It *is* a solemn thought—too solemn for irony.”

“I can't vision it,” said Sir Lewis with conviction.

“Imagine what would happen then! An empire must have a sound heart. Every continent would be affected. There would be world chaos.

“Do you not think now that I have something in my message? Look around you in the streets and see if you are satisfied. Patriotism should be universal—after it has been local. I have a cause, and nothing shall interrupt its message.”

He rose and left, thanking them for their kindness.

“He is quite sincere,” said Sir Lewis, “and very likeable.”

“He is harmless,” said the other, “and might become dangerous. He is hopelessly confused. He is too fanatical to be steady.” He had a subtle mind, and by his erudite researches was versed in the principles of



historical trend. "Keep in touch with him, and enrol him in the Caledonian League."

## II

Grant returned home feeling tired. The little house he found pleasantly restful ; more so, he was glad to see Flora again. He was grateful for the attention she gave him, for the well-cooked food and spotless linen. He found a satisfaction in these things that he secretly feared was sybaritic.

The publicity he was again achieving gratified him. Universal peace, sovereignty of the League of Nations, and land settlement were meeting with popular acceptance. Only that morning he had received a very nice letter from Sir Lewis Smith, requesting his presence at the Balsail commemoration. A most friendly letter. He strode along by Flora's side, wearing the light-weight rain-proof that she had insisted buying for him and absently flicking the leaves with the walking-stick that she had insisted on his carrying.

Now that everyone was so enthusiastic about his message, there remained to be arranged the final preliminaries only ; legislation would soon deal with them. And

perhaps a statue of Wallace somewhere in the city of Glasgow. Glasgow had been regrettably remiss.

"Every country should be self-supporting," he said aloud. "It's only common sense, only common protection. Small holdings and crofts—a necessity."

"Sure," said Flora agreeably. "Gosh! What a sun! You'd think the car rails were on fire."

The reclamation of large tracts of country by drainage and the application of up-to-date methods of fertilization. Thousands would be given work. But, of course, all that would happen shortly, now that he had led the way. He breathed deeply, happily. "That was a most successful tour I made."

"Yes," she replied evenly.

"But it was a great treat coming back. You've got everything looking fine. It's a real home."

Flora's throat contracted before she turned to him. "Do you like it?" she asked timidly.

"You're a regular little *hausfrau*."

"Am I? I'm a good housewife too, amn't I?" she said naïvely. "I mean to say, I like housework. It's great to think

of me as a housekeeper! It's queer. Did you like the blancmange?" He assured her that he did. "We'll finish it at supper-time."

"It's fine to have a quiet house to go to, as a home, as a retreat."

"It's lonely unless there's more than one in it."

"Were you afraid?"

"No," she said honestly, "but I was lonely."

"Would you like a little dog?"

"No, I wouldn't. I would like a little company."

"Whose?"

"Yours."

Inspired by the remark, he instantly offered to take her to Balsail.

A letter arrived readdressed from the *Spear* office. He told Flora about it as a proof of the general interest taken in his views. It was from a Professor Curtis, he explained. Professor Curtis had suggestions to make of the greatest practical value. The professor desired to see him personally . . . would travel north for that purpose.

Flora merely warned him to sign nothing with ink or copying pencil, and forgot about the professor until, answering a ring one

morning, she saw a swarthy fox-faced little man standing on the mat.

"Mr. John Grant resides here?" he inquired. "Professor Robert Curtis."

Flora retired discreetly to her duties, leaving the visitor closeted with Grant. She had her own thoughts to occupy her mind.

The cheque gained from the *Spear* had been banked in Grant's name. He withdrew money when required. Flora did not know what balance lay at the bank, nor did she feel any grievance at being kept in ignorance. The money was Grant's, and her sense of fairness prevented any wish to pry into his affairs. Were she to ask him he would tell her; she knew that, and the knowledge was in itself satisfying. But in her experience of Grant she had become aware of his thowless attitude to affairs. What he had been before the War she did not know, but could not suppress a feeling of sympathy for his employers.

Flora wondered how much of the money was left. Furniture had been bought, a quarter's rent had been paid in advance, food, clothing . . . nothing vanished so fast as money. She shuddered with disgust, thinking of the gramophone. Grant had

shown no readiness to find other work. He appeared to dedicate himself exclusively to matters that were no concern of his—and she sighed for his fecklessness.

She was prepared to go out and work herself, if she could obtain a job. But her business experience had been confined to serving in a stationer's shop. She was older now. Young girls were easily got for shops.

Sometimes she thought of broaching the subject to him. But politeness deterred her. She was afraid of herself in such an act . . . and she was afraid of Grant as well. She did not feel certain of him at any time.

The devout irrationality of her mood had died. She no longer saw in him a portent and manifestation to sinners. He had grown more human in absence and retrospect. Alone in the little house she had thought of him, often, but as a natural being. The sense of miracle had passed.

With its going had been reborn the vigorous reminders of life and existence. They must eat and live. Well, they would have to work. Her speculations there would bring her to a thought of frozen horror. She would stand, rigid, helpless, and wonder if all happiness were doomed to mockery and extinction.



His preoccupation maddened her. Exasperated, she wished to shout to him the need for common sense. She could not bring herself to do so ; she told herself that he was unusual, a man of surprise and wonder. For his benefit, for his sustenance, even while he remained in ignorance, one would stop at nothing, would think no sacrifice enough.

The outside door closed softly after a while, and Grant entered the kitchen. "That was Professor Curtis," he said. "Poor soul."

"Did you sign anything?"

"No."

"Was he wanting anything?"

"Well, in a sense, he was." Grant warmed his hands gladly at the fire. "He wants justice."

"I'd have thought a professor could get that all right."

"That man, Flora," he commenced thoughtfully, "—what did you think of him?"

"I didn't think very much," she said frankly.

"Well, he's of royal blood. A king by right!"

"Gosh! Should I have made tea?"

He fumbled in his pocket and produced a

sheet of paper. "You've heard of William the Conqueror, Flora?"

"Aye; didn't he command the Swiss Navy."

"The professor told me a wonderful story," continued Grant with some excitement. "I've taken notes of his story. It's a tragedy, Flora. A tragic story."

"William the Conqueror," he said deliberately, and consulting the paper, "had a son Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy. He was rightful King of England, but was tricked out of the throne by his younger brother, William Rufus."

"He was shot by an arrow," cried Flora delightedly. "I always minded getting that at school. The Red King!"

Grant was pleased. "That's right, Flora. You've got a splendid——"

"And what happened?"

"Robert Curthose never got his rights. But he was offered the throne of Jerusalem. He didn't take it."

"He would be scared of the Rothschilds," she suggested merrily.

"Duke Robert was kept in prison for twenty-nine years and——"

"What for?"

"Political reasons. He died in prison. He married a daughter of the Count of Conversana and had a son."

"Did she share the clink with him?" Flora interrupted. "Maybe he was glad to do time just to dodge her."

Grant rebuked her with a glance. "This son, William Clito, was rightful Duke of Normandy and King of England. But he became Count of Flanders only."

"He wasn't ill off, I'm thinking. Many a one would have been glad of the chance."

"Well, anyway, William Clito was killed in battle . . . the Battle of Aelst in 1128—in his father's lifetime."

"That was better," Flora reasoned, "than doing a lifer in the mush."

"The reference books say that William Clito had no children. But Professor Curtis says they lie."

"Well," Flora said, "that's plain talk."

"He says he has documentary proof that William Clito had a son, Robert Fitz-clito——"

"How is it," she asked, "that none of them had the same second name?"

"I suppose it's because they were royal."

“That sounds a lame enough excuse to me. What was the old buffer wanting, John?” She seated herself, helpless with laughter. “My, you’re serious! Did he want my cigarette-ends? Oh, but you’ll be the death of me yet!”

“Why, it’s no laughing matter, Flora. This Professor Robert Curtis is the direct male legitimate descendant of Robert Curthose. His name is a corruption of Curthose. He told me so. Do you understand the significance of that? It means he is a kind of royalty?”

“Do you know what Macara means? You don’t? Sir Frederick Saltire knows all about it. Macara means ‘son of the king.’ I know that much. I read it in the Highland Page of the *Spear*.”

“Son of what king, Flora?”

“King Cole, I expect. That reminds me, if you see the coalman give me a shout. Royal prince—yon wee nyaff!” In the merriment born of the professor’s connection with William the Conqueror Flora forgot to learn the professor’s intentions.

Mr. Rattray called later in the week and had tea. He called partly to discover what Grant was doing and partly to see Flora.

He liked Flora; he knew that she was suspicious of him.

"There's going to be a regular row," he said spacioously. "You'll see."

"Something extra on the rates," the girl remarked resignedly.

"Lord Haverhill's coming north—to Glasgow!"

"Gosh! They're all coming north, kings and lords. It's those excursion tickets."

"Old Sir Frederick's favourite foe. He owns the *Daily Examiner* and twenty other papers. His Glasgow paper's coming out next week. He says it's needed."

"There are plenty already, surely."

"Lord H. doesn't like to see the *Spear* doing so well. He wants to knock it out."

"But if he hasn't a Glasgow paper the *Spear* can't hurt him!" said Grant.

"No, but he wants to hurt Sir Freddy."

"So that newspapers aren't started to supply a want," Grant said slowly. "They're founded to settle personal differences?"

Mr. Rattray assented and settled himself comfortably at the table. "This is a cosy house. Nicer than the other one. You've never gone near the old place, have you?"



"No fear," Flora said decidedly.

"Best to keep clear of it. You don't want any of yon crowd nosing around here."

"They're human, like ourselves."

"I know that, Mr. Grant. But they have a different outlook. You sympathize with them, I know. But you don't want them bothering your sister, do you?"

"No," said Grant, with a sick feeling of disquiet. "No, I wouldn't like that."

"I know," said Rattray cheerfully. "Too many queer folk hawking about yon place. Don't you think so, Miss Grant?"

"I noticed them—sometimes," she admitted.

"It's a reporter's job to knock against the rag-tag of creation. Interesting, of course. Still, I wouldn't go near yon street, if I were you. Once an association's broken let it remain broken. That's what I say. Don't go back. They'd follow you up. They'd haunt your door. You'd never get rid of them."

Flora darted a frightened glance at him. "How?" she faltered.

"I see your brother is going to Balsail," remarked Mr. Rattray as he placidly buttered

a half-slice of bread. "That's one of the penalties of fame. The Caledonian League's turning out in force to commemorate the founding of a lace industry that's been defunct in Balsail for fifty years. How they hope to attract fresh industries by celebrating dead ones," he concluded mordantly, "beats me."

"Why were you saying that about the street—the other street?" Flora demanded urgently.

The journalist looked surprised. "Because I think you folk are more the class for a street of this type than the other," he suggested mildly. "Yon place was perilously like a slum, was it not? Of course," he added, "even a poorish quarter has its attractions, I suppose . . . one gets used to it in time, feels a kind of affection for it. You'll have memories of it, won't you?" His eyes momentarily met Flora's. "Home's home, and I suppose you'd enjoy the pleasure of keeping the house always ready for your brother's return." Mr. Rattray munched a mouthful of bread calmly.

"Yes," Grant said quietly. "It was a home. It had memories."

Flora turned on him furiously when Rattray had gone.

"Why didn't you thraw the young swine's neck?" she cried. "The little cur! The little rat that he is!" She wrung her hands despairingly, dull tears starting to her eyes. "Him and his dirty insinuations!—it was a threat, it was blackmail. Oh, John, I never liked that Rattray. The little spying cur that he is."

He tried anxiously to console her. The recollection of an earlier more vivid scene was less poignant than this, where the atmosphere was no longer sordid nor the surroundings garish.

"What is it he wants?" she cried. "Could he not speak out like a man? He was afraid of you, and you didn't see it. He was afraid. I always hated him. Coming here, to disturb everything with his dirty slights, his dirty sneers."

"Flora," he said, desperately interrupting the rising hysteria in her voice, "that wasn't a threat. Rattray is friendly enough, Flora. That wasn't a threat." His own eyes seemed infected by the fear in hers as they stood together, startled by a sense of insecurity. "It was a warning."

## III

A troop of reporters descended upon the little town of Balsail, patiently trudging the winding avenue to House of Trabboch. Press photographers appeared. Unwonted stir was on the sloping parkland around the mansion. The day was warm and sunny; the woodlands revealed their rich autumnal tints, the river intersecting the policies reflected the azure serenity of the sky.

There was to be a pageant of such historical events as had affected Balsail: Saint Marnock baptizing the early natives; Sir Nigel de Balasille leaving for Bannockburn (where he had espoused the wrong side for the first half of the battle); the Lady Elizabeth of Trabboch listening to Blind Harry reciting; Mary Queen of Scots knight-ing Sir James Rankeilour; Prince Charles Edward dancing a pavane with the beauteous Caroline Rankeilour. As a concession to popular taste there were booths and side-shows. Various eminent personages were to speak of the former glories of Balsail and hope piously for a revival of them. The Rev. Dr. Tullydaff would be present. Mr. Alan Gellatly, whose new romance *Could Kail Het Again* was on the bookstalls, would

be there. The Duchess di Sant' Anna and Admiral Starryshaw would be the guests of Lord Inverdoon, who had purchased Trabboch, the ancient seat of the Rankeilours. Sir Lewis Smith was coming from Aberdeen. From Ferrindonald, the seat that his late duchess had brought into his family, was coming the Duke of Ross.

"I thought," said Flora, "that maybe you would have needed a frock-coat for this. You wouldn't suit a stiff collar. You'd be like a coo looking ower a dyke."

They were walking up the avenue, having left the 'bus at Balsail mercat cross. Grant stopped to gaze at the grey weathered pile of House of Trabboch, its windows gleaming redly in the sunshine, red ivy creeping over its walls. "It's very beautiful," he said.

He was almost sorry that he had come. He was knowing the momentary doubt that he had already experienced—the fear of soaring beyond his own environment, his own set of values. He feared that he was departing from his own principles. No!—not departing; forging ahead of them, surely. If he had passed from the wretched and the suffering in his progress, that was inevitable. As he rose, he must leave poverty behind



him. He could do so, surely, without forgetting or ignoring it. His good clothes, his good food—they meant nothing. They made no change in him nor in his principles. They could not undermine the fervour of his convictions. He reminded himself also that his means were small and diminishing, and appeased himself with the thought.

They passed through the gathering crowds and made their way, to Flora's trepidation, in the direction of one familiar to Grant.

Sir Lewis Smith was glad to meet him again.

Sir Lewis Smith was charmed to meet Flora, assuring her of the strong family resemblance. He walked them about and introduced them to various people. Flora was bewildered and shy, and was unfeignedly glad to have a few minutes' respite with a homely body who was the Provost of Balsail's wife and who served behind the counter of her husband's fruit-shop on ordinary days. But she was whisked away again by someone—not Sir Lewis, this time—and found herself doing a round of the gardens and having the favour of a cup of tea in the big house itself. She never learned the name of her benefactor, who was none other than

Mr. Alan Gellatly, an author whose heroes drank claret and ate venison pasties but who personally preferred tea and French cakes.

The pageant was coming after the speeches because, as Lady Inverdoon pointed out, were the people to see the pageant first they might not wait for the speeches. Dr. Tullydaff, Admiral Starryshaw, Colonel Thomson the local member, and Mr. John Grant would all be speaking: on the Church's place in the Crisis, trade with the dominions, local industries, and patriotism respectively. It was hoped and suggested that Mr. John Grant would not diverge beyond the subject offered him.

Flora did not hear any of the speeches. She found the whole place exhausting, and wandered away, but not for long. Sir Lewis Smith, whom she was beginning to hate despite his knighthood, found her again.

"Lady Joanna is very keen to meet you, Miss Grant," and Flora understood that she was not expected to decline the opportunity of introduction to Lady Joanna.

"Who is Lady Joanna?"

"The Duke's daughter. A charming girl; very unassuming. I'm sure you'll be glad

to know her, for you are both about the same age."

Flora was dubious if similarity of age pre-supposed similarity of tastes. But she had already met a duchess who looked like a monkey and an admiral who resembled a giraffe. She felt that society was not so forbidding as it might be. Stoutly telling herself so, she was not prepared for the tall slender girl who was Lady Joanna Tarrill.

The daughter of the Duke of Ross spoke with so exquisite a voice and had such appraising eyes that Flora was at once enraptured and repelled. Lady Joanna's complexion was faultless, her manner easy, her features, if marred by overmuch sharpness in contour, remarkably distinguished. Flora regretted that the young lady's eyes were so transparently calculating.

"Don't you think that this is a simply *wonderful* occasion? . . . so many people," Lady Joanna said, and awaited a reply from Flora or Sir Lewis with attractive deference.

"I think it is up to *everyone* to do something to help to maintain trade," she said brightly.

"Father is so *very* anxious to give his

name to any cause of any kind to give people work," she said.

"I think it is simply *delightful* that *every-one* should pull together in a cause like this," she said.

Flora had been taking full scrutiny of the speaker, not having previously seen a duke's daughter, and now discovered that Sir Lewis had gone away. She reflected that this was the time when the knight might reasonably have remained ; but reminding herself that all human creatures, dukes' daughters or not, are in the image of their Maker, made a mental vow to put Lady Joanna in her place if she attempted airs.

"Your brother must be *frightfully* clever, Miss Grant," said Lady Joanna fervently, and Flora was gratified.

"Yes, your ladyship."

"I've read heaps of things about him. He admires Sir William Wallace so *very* much."

"That's his hero, your ladyship," Flora responded politely. For a moment she had hesitated about giving the young lady an address of honour. She was independently inclined. But, Flora thought, if she's a ladyship she'll get it from everybody, and

maybe I'd show my ignorance if I didn't say it.

"He has had a wonderful life—so many, many hardships," Lady Joanna exclaimed admiringly.

"Sure! But he could stand hardships to a band playing," Flora declared proudly.

"Perhaps," Lady Joanna suggested, "he may stand for Parliament some day . . . so many different types of people are in Parliament now."

"Oh, I wouldn't like that, your ladyship," Flora said emphatically. "Far better if we had a wee house in the country."

"Were you bred in the country? How very nice." Lady Joanna seemed overjoyed by the thought of a country upbringing and regarded Flora with sympathetic interest.

Flora thought rapidly. "Yes," she said.

"Which part of the country do you come from, Miss Grant?"

From novels she had read Flora understood that gentry shunned direct questions. Disconcerted as she was, she answered glibly that Mr. Grant preferred to keep the place of their birth secret for reason of the unwelcome publicity that would be the lot of their relations.



Lady Joanna agreed whole-heartedly with such reticence. "And of course we're all so *really* sentimental about those things, aren't we? Playmates, and schooldays, and bird-nesting, and things like that . . . you and your brother would be at school together?"

"Oh yes, your ladyship," Flora said with animation, "we had great times at school. What school were you at?" she added conversationally.

"I was educated mostly at home," Lady Joanna replied with her bright charming smile, and then, somehow or other, the monkey, and the giraffe, and the knight, and John Grant himself appeared, and Flora understood that the speechmaking was over.

She saw Grant being engaged in conversation with a man whose face was like that of a horse and who was a Labour M.P., and then Sir Lewis led her unresisting to a tall hawk-faced old man who stood on the terrace, at the head of a flight of steps.

His appearance was almost terrifyingly remote and distinguished; he greeted Flora with the perfect courtesy and the satyr eye which were his for all ranks and classes of women. Of all the personages Flora had encountered at Trabboch she liked the old

ashen-faced man ; she liked his white spats and dangling monocle ; she liked his aloof sureness. She observed the deference with which he was regarded, the clear space that was left around them. A sense of something which she could not understand was borne to her as she listened, awkwardly, to his pleasant platitudes. It was the sensing of an older and a feudal world. He was the Duke of Ross.

“ You have a very clever brother, Miss Grant,” he said, smiling down on her slowly and quizzingly. “ Take good care of him and keep him out of mischief.”

“ All right,” Flora faltered humbly.

“ And he has a very pretty sister.”

When Grant obtained a moment's speech with her he suggested that they go home before the buses grew crowded. She was regardless of pageants, and went gladly, not without saying *au revoir* to Sir Lewis Smith.

“ To-day,” Grant said reflectively as the bus left Balsail and took to the Glasgow road, “ I have spoken with influential people. I am nearing the end of the road.”

Some similar thought may have occurred to the Duke of Ross, who now tired more easily than in former years, and having left

shortly after Grant, was speeding to his house of Ferrindonald.

"I thought," replied his daughter disappointedly, "that he would be some sort of begging friar—that's what the newspapers said. Was it not? He was quite well dressed. I was frightfully disappointed."

"He wrote for a paper," said the Duke. "He would be well paid. Formartine is well paid for the use of his name merely."

Lady Joanna laughed softly, as at an amusing thought, and stared with sparkling eyes at the passing landscape. "A lay monk—the papers call him that."

"And she is quite an attractive girl. He is not afraid."

"I asked her—she told me—that they were at school together." Lady Joanna's eyes held less hardness and more mirth as they met her father's. "He could be her father!"

"He is very rash," murmured the Duke.

"He has clever eyes," said the girl. "I didn't hear him speak. I was talking to his lady friend at the time. What did he say?"

"Oh—mere rubbish, Joan."

"What is it that he wants?" she de-

manded, wide-eyed. She always knew her own wants positively.

"I don't know," said the old man with a hint of boredom. "Neither does he."

"But," she insisted, thinking of Grant's eyes, "there is such a frightful lot of stuff written about him! He must want something."

"Mr. Grant," said the Duke concisely, "is an inspired half-wit. Very dangerous."

"Why, he is quite sane!"

"Mr. Grant wants to change things, alter things. He is quite sincere, quite honest. He wants land settlement, a matter on which I no longer worry, for the land question is beyond us. He wants William Wallace, and—God knows—he can have him. He wants this League of Nations-cum-Scotland business."

"None of us want wars, surely," she murmured, thinking of a beloved eldest brother dead in France. "That can't be a dangerous belief."

"The man's principles aren't necessarily dangerous. It is the preaching of change that is dangerous."

"Is it, daddy?" she said indifferently.

"Whether the man is of this opinion

or that matters nothing. But the mere advocacy of any change is detestable."

"But he isn't a Socialist, father!"

"I wish he were!"

Lady Joanna was still thinking of Grant's eyes. "He is quite interesting. Is he not? Much more interesting than the common little girl."

"He is a talkative fool—a comedian," said the Duke impatiently. "A comedian in public life is always a menace. But we'll have to put up with him for a little."

"What about Sir Dougal McGugan, daddy!"

"McGugan is not a comedian; McGugan is a sedative."

"But I don't think Mr. Grant is really and truly a fool. But if he is a fool he can't be dangerous, surely."

"A man without labels, without party, and with a growing following, is a natural foe to order. Yon pair that were brought to Trabboch could wreck a country."

Lady Joanna smiled a bright incredulous smile.

"Recollect," said the Duke, "that most of the world's history has been made by fools and drabs."



"I thought that the Tarrills made a tremendous amount of Scottish history," she said serenely.

"So they did. And the one who made the most was a king's lady."

"Perhaps then," suggested the young lady lazily, "there is a great future for Miss Grant. If Mr. Grant becomes a Musso-  
lini."

The Duke stared ahead with old satirical eyes. "Did you learn your history when you were at school?"

"I never did," she said frankly.

"No. Well, there's merely a hair's-breadth of chance between a Mussolini and a Masaniello."

#### IV

Flora was delighted to see her photograph in the daily Press. She had been snapped talking to the Duke. Reverently she took scissors and cut the picture out.

"There!" she said boastfully. "I'll be marrying a prince soon. You wouldn't mind—would you?"

Grant studied the cutting indulgently. "But it says Miss Grant!"

"Better that than Mrs. Grant," she re-

joined airily. "The Duke's a widower. There's a chance for me yet."

"I can't understand why the *Spear* continually muddles my views," Grant exclaimed with sudden irritation. "It speaks here as if I'd joined up with this League. It says I'm their latest recruit."

"What's the odds, anyway?"

"I'll speak to Rattray about it."

"He's only a reporter. If he started giving orders at the office they'd chase him."

"Oh," he cried in sudden anger, "I wish I could break down all the stupid barriers at one blow. I wish I could make people see—see—see . . . faster than I'm doing. I wish I could banish sin in others as I have banished it in myself."

"Sin."

"I am free of all sinful thoughts. I have achieved that much."

"That's fine."

"And I'm happy."

"Was it a struggle?"

"It wasn't."

"You can't take much credit for it, then; can you? I mean, you can only be proud of getting the better of anything if it's been

a hard job to get the better of. No need to wear a rosette about it . . . is there ?

"What I mean to say," Flora continued, "is that others maybe have tried and failed, although they maybe tried harder than you."

"They would be weak."

"Aye, or hungry. D'you know, I was just minding that Minnie Sanderson will soon be out." She explained that Minnie Sanderson was the friend who had gone to jail.

"A lost soul," he said sadly. "What will you do ?"

"Heehaw," was the laconic reply.

"If she was your friend——"

"Associate," said Flora. "She can sink or swim. She was keelie, anyway. You're not going near her. You might take a fancy to her." She met his frown angrily. "Don't you talk to me about yon pig of a woman. You stick to William Wallace. You're maybe the Prodigal Son, dancing about the country, but I must have been the husks, for she was the swine."

He laughed, as he always did when Flora produced an odd allusion from the depths of memory. Sometimes she jarred him—she was cynical, he thought. But her good

humour was unfailing, her advice was shrewd, she was a capable housewife.

He had missed her greatly on his expedition. He enjoyed seeing her as he saw her now, sitting at the breakfast-table, fresh and smiling. Her aprons and overalls were always spotless, her hands were clean and her speech likewise. To him she personified cleanliness, purity. And he would marvel.

That morning his thoughts reverted to the Lady Joanna Tarrill, whom he also had spoken to at Balsail and whom his fastidious eye had regarded with cold appreciation. But the Lady Joanna had diffused an aura of worldliness, he thought. He surmised that the carefully bred daughter of the Duke of Ross lacked charity for others.

Flora had this quality. He knew that her lighthearted words about the woman Sander-son were a mask for concealed distaste. He appreciated Flora's feelings, he respected her mind.

The casual observer might not think that Flora was pretty. He had not thought so at first, and now his earlier blindness surprised him. She was beautiful, and her beauty was the result of gradual perception. It was as though a lamp within that slim

frame had steadily waxed in glow during the months, lighting that which contained it with incandescent meaning. The lamp of the soul. He admitted the force of a revelation new to him ; he knew now that physical beauty is physical beauty, but that linked with the spirit of goodness it is spiritual perfection.

He watched her covertly, studying her features with a manner of morbid joy. Some day Flora might marry. That was more than possible, and of all the people in this world, he knew that he would wish her bridegroom well. He would wish them well. Studying her, he could imagine the quiet satisfaction that the bridegroom would have from the sight of her steady grey eyes, the delight that he would experience in her quick alert movements and her quaint speech ; the rapture he would know from the touch of her bright yellow hair, the insane pleasure he would gain in pressing his lips against her warm soft neck. She was young, she was fair, and the past was past. If she had sinned, so proportionately had she suffered. The future was bright before her. In time the man would come, and might she be happy ! Thought of the girl's



possible future exalted him. A great wave of enthusiasm stole over him, suffocating in its fervour. He grew pale. His lips trembled.

Ah, he thought, these things I have renounced. Let others enjoy them. Were she twice as beautiful, she would be twice my sister. I am a portent and for me there should be nothing earthly. Kind gentle girl. Warm tender arms. Delicate loving lips. May she know true love if that should be her wish, and may I be there to bless them!

He was captured by the conviction that Flora in time would marry. He was pleased, and would not dismiss the thought from his mind. Watching her as she moved lightly about her work, he would be absorbed in contemplation of the prospect. He became obsessed by it, and it haunted him thereafter.

Grant was pleased by himself, glad that he should feel such pleasure and interest in the girl, such fraternal affection; glad that a yet unreached possibility should hold his deepest interest. He thought happily of the day when he would bid them good-bye and wish them well and return to his house alone. He conceived himself as sitting where he was now sitting, absolute stillness in the

room save for the tick of the clock, absolute silence . . . happy that Flora and another man were happy.

For days all other interests were forgotten in his intense absorption in this thought. Nor was that difficult, for he was finding his city home a chilling influence on his crusade. Tramping the country-side and speaking as he went had been easy, but this room-and-kitchen house was like a stronghold from which he could make sorties only. He had no friends and no standing. He had only the *Spear* to lean upon, and the *Spear* now had little to say. All over the country people were his supporters; he was convinced of that. But he could not keep in touch with them. He felt them slipping from his grasp.

"How is it," he wondered despairingly, "that men of no principles have huge organizations to back them and win them votes. And they get votes, get them from people who have no faith in them even while they vote for them. And I have a great cause, a beautiful message, a six-century-old battle-cry. Everyone who hears me believes. And I am helpless. I gain believers and have no supporters."

Hungry for encouragement of any kind, he voiced his thoughts to Rattray, who said very little in response. Rattray called on another evening—for he was a stranger to the city and enjoyed the comforts of the little house—and found Flora alone. He spoke more freely to her.

“Don’t tell Grant,” he said confidentially, “but all this speechmaking of his means nothing. I’m sorry that the *Spear* is dropping him, but a big paper thrives on fresh sensations. Grant—I mean, your brother—can’t expect to keep in the public eye. Everyone approves of his views more or less, but they’ll come to nothing. There’ll be another war that will blow him and you and me and the League of Nations to Kingdom Come.”

“What does it all mean, then?” she asked, feeling a belated confidence in Rattray in face of his evident sincerity. “What are you driving at?”

“Simply that this cause of his is going to peter out.”

“I’m glad.”

“I know that. Long ago Grant would have led a riot and been hanged for it. He’ll be extinguished all the same.

"It's like this," Rattray continued explanatorily, "the poor folk thought for a while that he was a sort of—Messiah, if I may put it that way. But the poor buy the *Spear* for the puzzles. They see the pictures of Grant apparently hobnobbing with society at Balsail. See?"

"Do you mean," cried Flora sharply, "that the *Spear* has done him dirty? Letting him down?"

"The *Spear* must give the news of the day. Its readers can draw their own conclusions. The folk who live in comfort would think it was nice to see him with the Duke, but those on the dole would think he had betrayed them."

"Mr. Rattray, I think you're decent. I thought you were a dirty cur. I told John that. I'm sorry."

"Accepted," said Mr. Rattray agreeably.

"I think the *Spear's* letting him down  
\_\_\_\_\_"

"The *Spear* isn't Grant's property, and he has given a deal of worry already. Are you a social reformer, too?"

"I've the house to look after. One job at a time."

"Do you read the *Lance*?—the new

paper, Lord Haverhill's paper. No, I know this isn't a public library. It says Grant should be arrested." He told the alarmed girl to keep her seat. "Of course he hasn't, but the *Lance* wants Grant's blood, for old Haverhill hates old Sir Freddy. It's time Grant gave the whole business a bye."

"I hate all this cause," she said impulsively.

"I know you do. Has Grant no other ambition? No thought for the future?" Flora shook her head helplessly. Mr. Rattray mused for a moment. "Tell me, has he money?"

"No; he hasn't."

"He's very foolish," the reporter said regretfully. "He should do what you wanted and go to the country. Then you could get married and have tons and tons of kids. Little Grants," he concluded blandly.

"Mr. Rattray!"

"Yes?"

"Oh," she cried with agitation, "do you want me to have a family without getting married? That's too bad. That's slapping on the insults."

"No," said Mr. Rattray, "I don't mean that."



“What do you mean, then?” said Flora, white-lipped. “What is it that you mean? Tell me.” Rattray was disconcerted by the change in the girl’s manner. He was silent, watching her with pity and concern. “Tell me,” she cried piteously, “what is it that you want?”

“I’m sorry that you should take this thing so badly,” he said soberly. “Grant should start to work instead of acting the fool.”

“He’s no fool,” she asserted tearfully, and scarce conscious of what she said. “He’s the decentest man I’ve ever met.” Rattray replied gently that he believed her. He told her not to distress herself. Had he alarmed her? “You’re not blackmailing me, Mr. Rattray?” she asked simply, raising her head to meet his gaze direct. “I think you’re decent. You’re not trying to make me a traitor to John?”

Rattray said quietly: “I’m warning you. Grant is a fool . . . if he isn’t a scoundrel. But he must be a fool, or he wouldn’t have taken you to Balsail.

“Listen,” he said. “Your neighbours in the street told me. You might have guessed that. I didn’t let them know at the office

because I thought it would spoil the picturesque aspects of the stunt. And I was sure you liked him and felt sorry for you."

Flora listened, rigid, with her eyes downcast. When he finished she said: "So you knew. All the time."

"All the time."

"Who else knows?"

"No one."

"He's been straight with me."

"Yes," said Rattray.

"No, he *has* been straight with me," she insisted. "We're brother and sister." She looked at him appealingly. "And I liked the idea."

"You're very fond of Grant."

"Yes," said Flora simply. "But," she added, "there's something terrifying in him. It's the cause, the cause, the cause, all the time. Mr. Rattray, I once thought he was Christ come back."

"Unhuman," he said.

"Mr. Rattray," she demanded imploringly, "how do you think all this will end?"

"I fancy," said he, "that it is already ended."

"Mr. Rattray, what will become of John?" He suggested that Grant might finish up as

a business man with ideas and no ideals.

"No, no. You're kidding me."

"And how will *you* end?"

When he had gone she waited with overstrung nerves for the return of Grant. She did not tell him of Rattray's visit. But searching in her memory for anything in Rattray's words that might be helpful to the man she loved, however opposed to her own interests, she sensed where the danger to his prestige lay and urged him to go into the poor streets of the city and regain his ebbing influence.

He was gladdened by her encouragement. On the following day he drew a great concourse of people around him, preaching on all the things he cherished and drawing into his argument as an illustration of wrongs, and to implement his promise, the misfortunes and calamities of Professor Robert Curtis.

And on the morning following the *Daily Lance* accused him of sedition and high treason, and demanded his arrest.

## PART SIX

### I

OVER the body of the orator the two powerful dailies battled. Political influence, advertising value, and circulation were at stake, and they fought for these prizes with concentration. They emerged, as all antagonists do from modern warfare, uncertain of the result. The *Lance* had gained a footing. The *Spear* had maintained its ground. Grant was once more suspect.

While the *Lance* had declared that Professor Curtis and his forerunner were a menace to the country, the *Spear* had stood by free speech and the rights of the citizen. More intensive inquiries were made concerning Professor Robert Curtis. It was discovered then that he was not a professor, had no authentic claim of any kind to royal descent, and indeed was a crack-brained amateur genealogist.

Flora was conscience-stricken by the

trouble she had unwittingly caused. With all her heart she had intended to assist Grant. With all her heart she wished they were away from noise and trouble.

She freely urged these views on him, exasperated by his calm reiteration of his mission. Speaking with all the persuasion of which she was capable, she could not penetrate the stony outworks of his faith. She could have struck him in her anger.

"They'll hang you yet," she cried with passionate conviction.

"I almost expect it and I think I desire it," he answered with inflexible composure.

"Aye . . . and leave me," she said bitterly.

She wished for quiet, for obscurity. And by that she meant for Grant as well. But the *Spear*, with whose name Grant's was now indissolubly linked in the public mind, was not willing to have its reputation tarnished by his irresponsible actions. To prove its own good faith the *Spear* had to convince the public of the constitutional good faith of Grant.

The discovery of Curtis's aberration decided the *Spear* on a policy of rehabilita-



tion. What the *Lance* had declared to be a revelation of a treasonable and rebellious kind was now interpreted by the *Spear* to be nothing more than the casual kindness natural in a man with the instincts of John the Baptist and Peter the Hermit. It was a stooping gesture, a gracious action to a misinformed enthusiast.

Dwelling fondly, and with secret misgivings, on the hold that Grant had gained on the affections of his countrymen, the *Spear* announced that the hour had come when public opinion should assess the single-minded orator in the light of veracity, freeing itself from the shackles imposed by malice, envy, and opportunism.

Reminding its readers that the Caledonian Trade Extension Outpost League was holding a great rally in Saint Andrew's Hall, the *Spear* suggested that an opportunity be given the apostle of pacifism to present his views from a proper platform in the city of which he was a native. He had spoken for the League before. So graceful an invitation would form another proof of the goodwill binding all classes of the community together, and incidentally give Mr. Grant's fellow-citizens the chance of hearing his

opinions under proper conditions and without distortion.

"Because," said the editor of the *Spear*, "he'll be scared by that Curtis business, and whatever he says is sure to fall below high treason. It's all a risk, but it's necessary. I wish he had never been born."

The *Spear* was fortunate in being able to obtain its desire. Mr. Grant was invited to speak for the League.

"I think," Mr. Rattray remarked when he next saw Grant, "that you speak best when you concentrate on abstract patriotism. It's a purer ideal." He negligently inquired if Flora had advised the mention of Curtis.

"No," Grant admitted. "I promised the professor as a favour. I didn't think he was an impostor." He asked Rattray if he would arrange to take Flora to the hall on the night of the rally, and the reporter agreed if duty permitted.

It was a wet evening, raw and sharp. Flora, as she evaded the motor-cars in Berkeley Street, longed for a few days of dry weather and wind, for she would be doing a washing soon and she wanted to hang out the clothes in the back green.

She and Rattray sat in the balcony. The hall filled rapidly and Flora stared at the crowded auditorium with eager eyes, as though each single unit was for her or against her. Rattray was in fine form, making ironical comments on anyone who attracted his interest. He now treated Flora as an old friend, and teased her, telling her that she was the belle of the occasion. Then he accused her of being a traitor to Grant's schemes. "You urged him to accept this chance, didn't you?"

"I know," she answered in a low voice. "You told me that mixing with the big bugs would finish him. I want him finished."

"You're a traitor to the orator."

"I'm not a traitor to the man."

"That's too subtle," he declared. "But why did you tell him to make a splash that last time?"

"I thought," she said confidently, "that it would be good—from his point of view . . . not from mine."

"Remorse of conscience?"

"Uh-huh."

"And Grant made a mess of himself over Curtis."

"I was glad."

"Flora," Rattray said, and although they had been speaking in soft tones he leant closer and spoke more quietly, "you must like Grant very much."

Flora gazed directly at him and nodded.

"Do you want to marry him?"

"I do."

Mr. Rattray sighed slightly and studied the head of the man in front. "I hope you'll be very happy."

"Thanks, Mr. Rattray."

The Caledonian Trade Extension Outpost League's heavy ordnance was entering.

"Look!" said Rattray in his natural voice, "that's the big bull of Bashan, the Reverend Tullydaff . . . see how his cheeks flap over his jaws, like a donkey's panniers! There's Gellatly, the novelist—he's all claymores and exclamation marks. He's due a knighthood. That's Mr. Jake Simpson, the Socialist M.P. His reputation rests on his face. It has made him a favourite with all parties. That's the Duchess di Sant' Anna—oh, you know her? Yes, very like a monkey. There's John James Macindoe, the poet. He's bringing another masterpiece forth next month, a triumph of

parturition. Something damned pawky, I expect. And that's the Duke . . . but you know him, too."

"The Duke's the best of the lot. Who are the tall and the thin men—those two together?"

"Weary Willie and Tired Tim. That's Strathdoon and Inverdoon. They're both millionaires."

"And John's sitting only two places from them!"

"They're maybe infectious."

After some introductory words by Lord Inverdoon, the chairman, the Reverend Adam Tullydaff rose and spoke. The great booming notes of his voice swung successively into the corners of the hall, stunning in their certitude. Dr. Tullydaff was humorous, whimsical, pawky, and solemn. Indicating the uncertain state of affairs on earth, he reminded them that there was no such uncertainty in a higher sphere, and that the direct terrestrial representatives of that higher sphere were the clergy. Admitting the latter-day disregard of religion and the paucity of church attendance, he emphasized his conviction that a return to churchgoing on the part of urban Scotland



would inevitably result in a revival of trade. Then he told some excellent anecdotes which put everyone in excellent humour. Thereafter he was very serious, reverting to the immodesty of feminine fashions and declaring that they had a deleterious effect upon the health, the morality, and the trade of the country.

Dr. Tullydaff then told a parable of a rich man who asked his two servants whether they wanted as a Christmas gift a five-pound note or a Bible. And the first servant said he had a Bible already, and chose the five-pound note.

But the second servant said he would take the Bible, although he had Bibles at home, 'For,' he said, 'we cannot have too many Bibles in the home.'

"And lo!" cried Dr. Tullydaff, and his great bellowing voice rose to pitches of power and wonder, "when he took the Bible home and opened it, there!—at the first chapter of Genesis was placed a five-pound note. And farther on there was another five-pound note, and *another* five-pound note. And a *fourth* five-pound note."

Rattray was much shocked. "What incentive to hypocrisy," he murmured.

“The moral of that is,” roared Dr. Tullydaff, “that if you shun Mammon and choose the Bible—if you pass by the cinemas and the theatres and the temptations of the day and join and attend the church . . . you shall be blessed spiritually and rich materially.”

Dr. Tullydaff then was whimsical for a few minutes and sat down amid much applause.

Those in the body of the hall now observed that the platform party was gazing at the way by which they had entered. Almost at once there appeared on the platform, in full-kilted panoply, the generous figure of Sir Dougal McGugan.

His appearance was the signal for unbounded enthusiasm. Sir Dougal took his seat amid laughter and cheers. Those around him insisted on shaking hands and those farther away smiled a welcome. The Duke of Ross leant forward slightly, studying the comedian with amused interest.

“Our old friend Sir Dougal is late but welcome,” said Lord Inverdoon cheerfully.

“I’m sorry, frien’s a’, but my caur got brokit doun on the road,” responded Sir

Dougal urbanely. "Forbye, I was in nae hurry, for I kent there would be nae whuskey gaun."

The apparition of Sir Dougal, whose non-appearance had given heart-burnings to many, infused a spirit of confidence and gaiety in all present. That infection may have actuated Mr. Alan Gellatly to a degree of inspired eloquence. He spoke next and he said that a study of the works of Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson would reveal enlightening facts helpful during a time of stress. Scott and Stevenson had been his unfailing comfort for sixty years. Scottish history had ended in 1746 . . . he did not regret that fact. He was glad of it, for it allowed Scotsmen to study the history of their country in perspective. That fact should give all patriotic Scots satisfaction when they considered the difficulties in which other countries that were still making history were finding themselves. Of course Scotland also had economic difficulties, but if she faced the past she would ultimately find peace.

Mr. Gellatly's speech was considered sound reasoning, although the conclusion of it was lost to Flora and Rattray owing to a whis-

pered argument behind them as to whether Dolores de la Monte or Anny Hauckel had taken the leading part in a recent film of one of his novels. But Flora, for one, did not care, and she whispered her delight to Rattray in the next speaker. For the old Duke of Ross was rising to his feet.

"Look at him!" said Rattray. "See him trying to put a smile on his face! How he hates us all!"

"I am proud and delighted," said the Duke in his rolling hesitating voice, "to be asked to speak before, and to speak with, a representative gathering of Scotsmen and Scotswomen. In these days when we are all of us making very great sacrifices, and when we are trying to recover from a tremendous, a tremendous war in which we gave our best blood, our . . . we are still finding things extremely difficult. Trade, as we all know, is very, is extremely bad. And the object of the Caled—of this League, which, I venture to think, and I believe, is a very good object, is to revive trade. *Can we revive trade?*" The Duke paused, scrutinizing his audience with genial inexpression. "I say we can. We are not yet beaten. We won't be beaten. We've never

been beaten yet. And, I venture to say, we are too old, and too great a nation, to learn defeat now."

"Look at his roving eye," whispered Rattray. "The bad old devil."

"We are all of us making tremendous sacrifices," said the Duke. "We are making them gladly, for we know, we realize, that the British Empire depends upon our sacrifices. It's only by pulling our full weight . . . getting our *backs* into it"—the Duke made an expressive gesture with his arm—"keeping a stiff upper lip."

"I remember, in 1917, writing to the Prime Minister regarding the terms which the Allies would be willing . . ." The audience watched, fascinated, the great Scots duke who could talk so casually of writing to a prime minister.

"Our duty in this crisis is to sit tight, to keep a stiff upper lip . . .

"To pull our weight . . .

"To make sacrifices . . .

"To . . .

". . . lip

". . . pull . . ."

The Duke did not speak for too great a time. He wanted to get to his own home,



and nothing but a genuine sense of duty had brought him from it.

"He's a nice old man," said Flora regretfully during the applause.

Mr. Jake Simpson explained that the cure for unemployment was more work. If they got more work there would be more trade, and that increase of trade would automatically make further work. If new industries were embarked on, and if new standards of living were introduced sympathetic to the new rates of wages brought about by the new industries, he believed that a new and pacific principle would be reached to the benefit of everyone. If the present industrial crisis passed, better times might be expected. If the change was for the better, increased employment was a certainty. If, however, industry pursued a downward course, the situation would be less satisfactory. He believed, however, in optimism, and was positive that optimism was the spirit with which to approach industrial problems. If the unemployment figures decreased they could confidently believe that industry was improving. If, however, there should be additions to the unemployment totals, they might expect a

decline in industry. If, on the other hand, new industries were commenced to replace those that had departed, a general revival of prosperity would be indicated. But if trade remained sluggish the outlook would be serious. And if there were no prospects of an early trade revival the outlook might be considered as grave.

One thing, they all had complete confidence in the working man. And if he got a reasonable rate of wages, and if he got satisfactory conditions of living, and if he got a fair deal, the outlook would be rosy, if he got work.

The applause performed on Flora the not unusual effect of applause—it made her reflective. She gazed dreamily on the hundreds of heads beneath, at the hands all meeting and parting in mechanical time, at the set waxwork grins of appreciation. She wondered idly if every speaker that night would receive his share of applause whatever he might say. Her glance wandered to the platform, to the courteous old duke taking his departure—his Grace had not dared to leave until the Labour man had spoken lest his act be misconstrued—to the wolf-like features of Grant, to the wrinkled

little Italo-Scots duchessa, to the sprawling bulk of Sir Dougal McGugan. She saw them in a haze of perplexity and surmise. There they were!—they were all there for some reason, John among them. And outside, she thought with a shiver, the streets were forbiddingly cold, unutterably bleak and cold. People were being born and were dying, and laughing, and starving—and she and all these people were listening to those people on the platform. And the atmosphere was becoming close and warm, the hall was crowded. Who was this now?

It was Lord Strathdoon, Rattray said, a manufacturer or exporter or something. Lord Strathdoon was a bald little man with a waxed moustache. He spoke with difficulty, and as he spoke his face began gradually to perspire.

“He hasn’t got a figure like the Duke, Mr. Rattray.”

“His is at the bank.”

“It was thought,” said Lord Strathdoon, “when we went for to regain our trade after the war, that we would have no difficulty in regaining our trade. But we were brung back to realities before we knew what

we were about. Other countries had captured our markets during the war that had been ours before the war when the other countries hadn't none of the markets. The foreign countries where our raw and finished goods fotch a ready market are now pretty well making thur goods themselves or dealing with the other countries that are now our competitors in the markets. Countries that buyed our goods before the war now have their goods fotch from the other countries. Thur competitors were learned by us during the war to fall back on their own efforts, and through no fault of our own we have less markets than we used to have before the war when we had markets. Those of us whose memories go back to before the war will find that their memories haven't went very far before they can remember the prosperity of the years before the war.

"It is the prosperity that we had before the war when we was prosperous," said his lordship impressively, "that it is our urgent business to regain. Let Glasgow Flourish! Thur words that Saint Mungo said when he introduced Christianity to this city must be our motty. Let it be our motty." He

waved a fat pink hand in the air as a conjurer might do in bringing a canary from nowhere. "We all know as true Scotchmen what Robert the Bruce said. 'Mak Sicker'! We must mak sicker. There aren't none of us here . . ."

Flora sat very still, absorbed by the rigidity of Grant's features. He was lifeless-looking, gazing neither to right nor left, nor to anyone who spoke. His eyes were fixed ahead, and above the mass that faced him. They stared into space, to a tremendous distance, as though he saw sights, dreamed dreams.

"Did you hear that?" Rattray whispered delightedly. "Lord Strathdoon is talking about his schooldays. The truant!"

"Ah," she thought tragically, "he is not thinking of me, anyway. No. I am nothing. I'm nothing to him. I'm only proof of his sinlessness." Her eyes shone from the bitterness of her feelings. "I'm part of the testimony that'll get him into heaven. Oh, God, how easy it's been for some!"

She moved convulsively as Grant rose to speak. She had fixed on him her devouring eyes, and for a moment had the wild notion



that he was coming to her, straight and swiftly from his seat, gaining bulk and portent as he came. Her hand tremblingly sought Rattray's arm, but as she heard the familiar voice sounding so oddly in that strange place, her composure returned.

"I am obliged," he said, "for the invitation so kindly given me to speak here, for I am not a member of the Caledonian League.

"The object of this League is common knowledge. We sympathize with its ambitions. We applaud its aims.

"As one speaker said, we must make sacrifices. We must. The least of us must make sacrifices. So must the greatest.

"Another has said that we must regard the past. We will do that, and learn from it what will help us to face the future.

"Of the trade markets of the world I am ignorant. But I fear they are the cause of wars.

"Of labour depression I know very little—only that if machinery fails man in his need of a livelihood, then man should forsake machinery and return to what sustained his fathers.

"Of the churches, their requirements and

claims, I know nothing. I have not entered a church voluntarily for twenty years.

"I know this, that humanity is prostrate and writhing in its uncertainty. I know that hunger is very real, and so is cold, and so is despair.

"I know that humanity has turned to every science and to every creed and to every system in the world for comfort, and has found none.

"And we ask ourselves, in what do we believe ?

"We believe in the sublime majesty of a Supreme Being. We believe in the manifest kindness of the earth that we walk upon. We believe in the ultimate happiness of the human race.

"There is God, there is the blessed ground, and there is man. These three are a holy trinity.

"The state in which we live is the work of man. It is civilization. The earth was made and we were placed upon it, and we work it according to our will.

"The civilization that we have made is barbaric, and it cannot last. It is a contradiction in terms.

"Our forbears hunted in the green forests

and on the pleasant hill-sides. They hunted, and they laughed and lived, and they were innocent in a fashion.

“Now we are thrallled and thirled to the life of the city, and in the cities we live. They suck the dwellers from the country-side into their bellies by a thousand roads.

“Great slums appear in them and breed disease. Great hospitals are built to fight it.

“You stand in the pleasant country-side and the fine fresh air surrounds you like a blessing. You come to the city and you live in a room that is eight feet square.

“And the spirit of the city, which is evil, slays the spirit that was yours. It is in the cities that the machines of war are made and the chemicals for destruction. It is in the cities that wars are planned. It is in the cities that men fight cruelly for wealth. Destruction and frustration.

“The country-side is very pleasant. There are fields and hills and the singing of birds. And once there was the free open speech of men and women. But there is little of that now.

“I believe that man was made for the

land. Because the land was made for man. I believe that there is wisdom in the ordinances of God. We are not wise to ignore them.

“ O people !

“ It should be our creed to think well of our neighbours, nor attempt to slay them. It should be our desire to see sunburned children playing in green pastures. It should be our faith to love our country without ignorance or boastfulness. To love it, clear-eyed and simply, as the great begetter of trust.

“ And to the name of our country we should thrill, not with the rattle of bayonets and the gleam of steel, but as a man is glad at the sight of she whom he loves. So should we regard the land of our birth.

“ And as our love we should bedeck her. Her hill-slopes we should clasp with girdles of green plantations. We should stud her quiet valleys with houses like diamonds set in emerald. Over her rivers we should throw bridges as a bracelet, and on the headlands that stretch to ocean place light-houses that would shine as a jewel shines upon the outstretched finger of a queen.

" We should enrich her with our offerings, striving each man to outvie the other with his gifts. We should claim the autumn harvest as a token of her benevolence. In the spring we should rejoice for the promise of the flowers.

" And at the end, when all earthly interests are passing, then could we prepare to let her keep us, everlastingly, in the rapt quietness of her embrace.

" O people ! "

In the attitude familiar to the corner crowds he paused, and gazed imploringly around. He would have had them rise in a body to introduce the millennium of his desire. And the audience stared at him with interest.

" Isn't he clever ! " Flora whispered fiercely.

Rattray replied : " He is very sincere."

The admonitory arm drooped slowly, impelled by inward surprise at the simple handclapping, at the lack of the expected great enthusiasm, at the obtuseness that failed to discern the fine path to achievement and peace. A flame was burning in his mind, a wonderful vision burgeoning in his soul. The greatness and wonder of it



were terrifyingly real and were possible to him. To light the flame in others—to make them see! . . . if they would see!

“O people!” he said sadly.

He sat down amid friendly applause. He had intended waking them to a frenzy of fervour, shaking them free of despondency, charming them with a conception of great contentment and beauty. But he was one with the Simpsons and the Strathdoons. No more, and perhaps less. He sat down, puzzled and looking tired, amid friendly and genial applause. The roof was strong.

Lord Inverdoon was standing now. He was smiling; he mentioned a name; there was a great outburst of welcome.

“Good old Dougie!”

“Good old Dougie!”

“Good old Dougie!”

There was no variety in the welcome, but it was spontaneous. The fat mass of McGugan was disgorged from its chair; he haunched forward, a broad smile upon his face.

“We’ll hear some real sense now,” audibly remarked the man on Flora’s other side.

“Good old Sir Dougal.”

“Na, na, my frien’,” cried the comedian firmly. “Nae ‘sirs’ frae my auld trusty frien’s in Glesca. Just ca’ me Dougie. ‘Dougie’—as ye kent me langsyne.” A tremendous ovation greeted Sir Dougal’s modesty.

“Langsyne,” he repeated with a melancholy sigh. “Langsyne, my frien’s, when we paddilt in the wee bit burns wi’ oor wee bare feet, and gethered the brambles for oor mithers’ jeely pans. Aye, my frien’s, we’ve paddilt in a bigger burn since then. Aye, aye. Hoots, aye. It’s mony a sair, sair day since we left the wee bit clachan, my frien’s. Mony a weary day since we left the wee bit thackit hoosie wi’ a sair thocht and a stoot he’rt . . . tae paddle in the burn o’ life.”

Sir Dougal stepped along the platform, and Sir Dougal stepped back again. The incredible pattern of his kilt was revealed, and the gross measurements of his waist; the grotesque arrangement of his heavy trunk upon his inadequate legs.

“I was haein’ a bit crack wi’ a chiel frae England the ither day—England, that’s a wee bit placie attached tae the end o’ Scoatland, ye ken—” (laughter) “—and he

says tae me, says he: 'Dougie, whether would ye raither be an Englishman or a Scoatchman?' Says I: 'Weel, whether would you raither be an Englishman or a Scoatchman?' 'Oh,' says he (awful precise, my frien's), 'I'd raither be an Englishman.' 'Aweel,' says I, 'puir soul, ye canna help it.'

"I was jist thinkin'," continued Sir Dougal when the applause had subsided, "that it's a wunnerfu' thing tae be Scoatch. Aye, man, aye. Hoots, we can a' be prood we're Scoatch. Here we are, my frien's, gethered here on what's maybe the greatest nicht in Scoatch history, strivin' tae fin' a way oot o' oor deeficulties. And what for no'? We'll fin' a way. Because we're all Scoatch." (Loud applause.)

"This nicht, my frien's, we've listened tae the floo'er o' Scoatch intellect. We've listened tae his Grace the Duke o' Ross, ane o' oor grand auld nobeelity. And mark ye, my frien's, the auld nobeelity o' Scoatland has done her mony a braw day's work." (Applause.) "We've had the great Alan Gellatly, oor modern Walter Scott, whase braw stories stir oor true Scoatch blood." (Applause.) "We've heard Dr. Tullydaff,

a rale Scoatch meenister o' the braw auld type o' Knox." (Applause.) "We've heard Lord Strathdoon and Lord Inverdoon, twa o' the gentlemen wha maintain Scoatland's commercial prosperity and wha hae made her what she is." (Applause.) "And we've heard Mr. Grant and Mr. Simpson, twa workin' men, plain common workin' men o' the type o' you and me, my frien's. And listenin' tae them a', I felt kin' o' sure that Scoatland was in safe hauns.

"I mind once when I was in New York a wee fella came up tae me and says: 'Are you Dougie McGugan?' 'I am,' says I. 'Man,' says he, 'I'm gled tae see ye. Ye'll mind me?' 'I canna say I dae,' says I. 'D'ye mind the German biscuits ye used tae buy in Broon's shop on the Setterday nicht tae tak' hame tae the wife when ye lived in Kilrenny?' 'Man, aye,' says I. 'Aweel,' says he, 'I stuck the cherries on them.'" (Loud laughter.)

"Talking o' Kilrenny," continued Sir Dougal reminiscently, "minds me o' a wee bit sang I've composed . . . however, we'll no' bother aboot that . . ."

"The song!" "Give us the song!"

“Spit it out, Dougie!” “Come away, Dougie!”

“Hoots, frien’s, if ye hear me noo ye’ll no’ pay your bawbees tae hear me in the richt place,” protested Sir Dougal coquet-tishly.

“Come away, Dougie.” “No renaiging.” “Come on, Dougie, off your chest with it.”

The platform party becked and cooed encouragement.

“Oh, he’s going to sing!” exclaimed Flora delightedly.

“Keep cool. He always wangles this,” Rattray explained.

“Aweel, my frien’s,” said Sir Dougal with evident reluctance, “if that’s the way o’t, I’ll say nae mair. I’ll gie ye the sang . . . but dinna tell everybody!” He coughed, smiled confidentially, cocked his head to one side.

“It’s a sang, my frien’s, aboot a braw wee Scoatch lassie—and whaur will ye get a nicer lassie than a Scoatch lassie? A braw wee lassie. Aye, aye. She’s a wee Fifer, tae, like mysel’. We’re the billies tae haud a grip o’ the bawbees, ye ken. Hooch aye.



“Aye, frien’s, she was a braw bit lass. I saw her and I thocht: ‘Aweel, some decent laddie’s staunin’ in his ain licht.’ Man, I fell in love wi’ the wee soul, my frien’s. I felt that I could jist hae sung tae a’ the world that

“Jenny, o’ Kilrenny,  
Is my bonnie winsome doo.  
Jenny o’ Kilrenny  
Is the only girl I lo’e.  
She’s a bonnie bright wee thing,  
When I see her I could sing,  
And I’ll bet ye a’ a penny if ye saw her so would  
you.

“Aye, aye, my frien’s, that’s wee Jenny. It was on the road I met her, in the gloamin’, near her faither’s wee bit white-washed thackit hoosie. ‘It’s a braw nicht,’ says I. ‘Maybe,’ she says, ‘but it puts nae siller in my pooch.’” (Laughter.) “So, seeing she wasna verra sociable, I jist went my way, passing the hoosie where her auld faither was maybe haein’ a nip o’ the rale auld Hieland Dew and her auld greyheidit mither would be sittin’ wi’ a tear in her e’e thinkin’ o’ her braw bit son awa’ in Glesca, maybe, savin’ up his bawbees for the rent o’ the wee bit white-washed

thackit hoosie. Aye, aye. Hooch aye. Sae, thinks I :

“ Jenny, o’ Kilrenny,  
Is the bonniest lass I’ve seen.  
There arena verra many  
Are as fit to be a queen.  
She’s the finest lass in Fife,  
She’s the sunshine o’ my life,  
And I’m sure there arena any hae such bonnie braw  
bricht een.

“ Aye, aye,” said Sir Dougal regretfully.  
“ Aye, aye. Bonnie wee Jenny. Bonnie  
wee Jenny o’ Kilrenny.”

Sir Dougal had other verses to sing, and he sang them with effect. He had a fine voice. The audience was roused to a pitch of vociferous enthusiasm, and Sir Dougal wiped the sweat from his face with evident satisfaction.

“ Sae lang,” he said, “ as Scoatchmen enjoy a Scoatch sang, oor puir kintry isna verra faur wrang. My advice tae ma fella-Scoatchmen is : ‘ *Be canny. And gether the bawbees.*’ If ony man says tae me, ‘ Whit’s wrang wi’ Scoatland ? ’ I say, ‘ There’s naething wrang.’ ” (Applause.)  
“ My frien’s, keep oor bonnie wee bit kintry as it is, withoot change or withoot alteration, for that’s the way a’ leal-he’rtit Scoatchmen like it.” (Applause.)

At that moment Grant, in silence, rose and took his departure.

"Come on!" said Rattray.

Grant was not visible when Flora and Rattray gained the street. They walked to the little house through a cold drizzle of rain. "I think," said Rattray, "you've got your wish. Your fellow-countrymen are very staunch. Sir Dougie was a greater attraction."

Flora was blithe. "But how is it," she asked, "that if all those gentlemen wanted to improve things, none of them suggested doing anything?"

At the mouth of the close Grant was waiting, for he never carried a key, and Rattray left them there.

When she lit the gas the girl observed how drawn were Grant's features, and how dejected he was. These signs heartened her. She poked the gathering coal into a blaze and placed the kettle thereon. Soon it began to sing. As she spread the table for supper she guessed that the time was not far distant when the crazes of Grant would dissolve away and she could be certain of permanent peace of mind.

She knew that there was no obstacle in the way apart from Grant's obsession.

On the morning following she went out early to the shops. A poster of the lately launched *Daily Lance* attracted her attention, and she bought a copy, wondering why Grant's name should be singled out from the other speakers, and with such sinister wording. When she reached home one rapid glance at it told her enough.

The *Daily Lance's* Special Investigator had discovered information that, in the light of the feud between Sir Frederick Saltire and Lord Haverhill, must have been particularly welcome. And in prominent type was a revealing column of comment upon John Grant, supplemented by the detailed information obtained from the now released Minnie Sanderson about the girl Flora Macara or Flora Grant, called Claire.

## II

The lettering blurred before her eyes, but she still stood staring at it, stiffened by horror as its cruel meaning bored into her senses. With the paper clutched tightly in

her hand she stood, and the distant call of a coalman, the laughter of the children in the school playground, mingled equally in her consciousness with the agony of exposure.

The veil cleared from her eyes. She observed the paper dully, and sat down, fearing that she would faint.

It was yet early, and Grant had not risen. She was letting him sleep off his exhaustion.

She had time to think. But she could not think. A rapid succession of images passed through her mind instead, catastrophic in their implication. Her eyes opened wildly before those grim impressions. She saw horror in every one of them; she saw them with the clarity of terror, but her brain was benumbed and could not grapple with them.

Slowly the capacity for thought returned, and with it a gush of anguish. She, of all people, had brought him down. She had shamed him by her shame, felled him because she was fallen. The pitiless thought stabbed her with the cold measured timing of a machine. She shrank before her own admission. She had wrecked him.

Who and what was she that had hoped



to have him? she thought, abased. Had she sinned in her day and hoped to escape the penalty? She had sown. She reaped. She was paying doubly; her payment, and his.

In Flora a fierce and terrible surge of rebellion rose. She thought of phases of her life that she had hoped were buried; nightmarish experiences, kaleidoscopes of dark shadows and slanting lights; sombre passages with feeble gas-jets, wheel stairs darkening as they descended; damp alleys and sinister entries, the smell of night air in a vortex of back courts, the gleam of windows, the stink of garbage. She saw the yellow stains of street lamps on wet pavements, the rush and passage of a glittering tram in the quietening streets, she heard the monotonous clicking of her heels. Ribaldry and coarseness; rebuff; the scowls and leers of policemen; the stares of women. The heavy odour of perfume was in her nostrils, the jingle of bracelets sounded in her ears. Memory was a whirling horror of night and light, sorrow on sorrow.

She quivered from the intensity of recollection. Ungovernable rage for all things shook her, that she should be outcast and

despised, trampled, trodden on. The few past months were paled; their hours of gladness, their plans, their fond presumptions were hurled to nothing by the rude march of the past.

She had been ruined, she had been raised . . . the girl's pitiful paroxysm faded swiftly in the thought of the man who had lifted her without scorn from the streets. Her own sorrows passed with reproach before the tenderness of her concern for Grant. Now he seemed a grave and splendid figure. His ambitions became things of awe and majesty. She wondered timidly what tremendous schemes she had shattered, what plans beyond her limited vision had been wrecked by his charity and her vice.

His patience and tolerance, his pleasure when she was happy, his incredible renunciation—those were choice moments.

She could hear him moving in the room. He would be through, so soon!—and she glanced anxiously at the clock, as though her eyes might soften time. He might kill her, as inflexible in anger as in belief. Or perhaps his first thought would be of herself, she fancied humbly; that would be like him.

Flora started up frantically as the door opened. The newspaper lay on the table. As he entered she looked at it and then at him, and burst into tears.

Grant was at her side immediately. She freed herself, and pointing at the paper told him to read.

She leant against the sink, sobbing quietly. But at his long silence she wondered, and raised her head to look at him.

He was reading without movement or emotion. When he was finished his gaze wandered stupidly to her own, like the gaze of a drunken man.

"Yes—yes," she cried hysterically, "it's me."

Again his glance reverted to the paper, slowly and doubtingly. Then he groaned and sank his head upon it. "My cause."

The clock ticked insistently. For a little there was no other sound.

"My cause."

He straightened, and lifting the paper as if to retain it, dropped it again on the table. She heard him close the door gently as he returned to his room.

Flora then proceeded with the house-work. Some things she had intended doing on that

day, and these she prepared to execute. So she placed fresh paper on the shelves of the cupboard, and scoured the knives on the board, and laid a new piece of oilcloth on the lid of the coal bunker. She worked intently, performing her duties with care. When she called Grant for his dinner no trace of any emotion showed on her face. Grant had not left his room all morning.

In the afternoon he left the house. The girl ran to the window and watched him stride swiftly out of sight. She returned to the kitchen and busied herself for a little before seating herself in front of the fire. There she remained motionless for a long time until, as though inaction was intolerable, she hastily prepared herself for outdoors. But when ready she paused irresolutely, and after watching the rain pattering on the playground, took off her hat and coat. She now saw that the tea hour was near and put a shovelful of coals on the fire and set the table.

Grant returned at five, glancing into the kitchen before going to his room. Shortly she followed him, hesitating before she opened the door.

"Would you like your egg poached or boiled?" she asked.

He looked up awkwardly and answered. For a moment they scrutinized each other with wan interest. Flora then withdrew to the kitchen.

Grant appeared in answer to her summons, and they sat down and ate together. He remarked that it was cold outside.

"You'll be ready for your tea," the girl said.

She asked him if his tea was sweet enough.

"Flora."

"What is it?"

"This is a dreadful business."

"Yes," she said sadly.

"If people would believe . . ."

"They won't," she answered briefly.

"I've been walking all the time. My head was whirling," he remarked incoherently. "It's a shock. They won't believe."

Flora did not respond.

"Flora, it's what people think . . ."

"I know what they'll think," she replied steadily. "They'll think you're a hypocrite."

"And they'll listen no longer."



The girl quivered as though lashed. "It's a pity," she said.

"And you, too."

She looked at him frankly. "It doesn't matter much for me, does it? What I mean, what they say about me is mostly the truth, isn't it? And it doesn't hurt," she ended indifferently.

"It doesn't hurt?"

"No."

"You're fortunate, Flora."

"I was born that way," she said, and laughed.

When the meal was over she cleared the table and washed the dishes. Grant moved restlessly about, but the girl did not seem to notice him as she carefully piled the china and replaced it on the shelf, and latterly he left the kitchen. For an hour she read a magazine, and then Grant reappeared. Flora stopped reading to build up a brisk fire for him. The wind was rising and the raindrops pattered on the window-panes like voices out of the darkness. Grant shivered suddenly. The girl was washing the coal-dust from her hands. He stepped over to her. "I'm maybe selfish."

"How?" she asked, reaching for a towel.

"I've hardly had a word of sympathy for you."

"Don't need it, John."

"But, Flora," he said urgently, "I'm not crying for myself either. You know that. I want you to know that."

"I know," she said, looking directly at him. "It's the other thing."

"The cause."

"I know. I'm to blame. I'm sorry."

"You're not to blame. But it's the cause. It means terrible things, Flora"—his voice sank to a whisper—"it means, perhaps, that the future of the world is changed, for the worse."

"And all through me," she said quietly.

"No, no, Flora. But the cause . . . my God," he cried bitterly, "I shall go mad."

"Sit down, John." The man sank into the chair by the fire and the girl knelt beside him. "Listen, John, what can help things?"

"Nothing," he said with a groan.

"Listen, John, I was thinking—I thought this afternoon that there's maybe a way out.

"John, do you know of any way?"

Grant shook his head hopelessly.

"I was thinking," she said rapidly, "that

there might be some way of . . . of wiping the slate clean, in a kind of fashion. You know, sort of making things as if they hadn't been. And I thought that if people realized something like that you could maybe carry on with your cause. You know . . . sort of regain their confidence. That right? You know, John, all the stuff in that paper . . . it's me they're at. I'm famous, John . . . at last." She threw back her head and laughed loudly. "They're just kind of hinting at you, but it's me they're getting at first, and getting at you through me. But, John, if you could just carry on where you'd left off, that would be all right, wouldn't it? I mean, you could preach and lecture, and so on, all about those things you're wanting like what you did before, eh? Supposing people thought you weren't to blame—and neither you are—but if they were led really to believe by something or other, then things would be all right, wouldn't they? If someone else seemed to take the blame."

"No one will take the blame for you and me, Flora," he answered despondently. "God alone knows we are guiltless."

Flora laughed again, harshly. "That's

not much help down here, John. That right? But supposing someone did seem to take the blame, you could carry on, couldn't you?"

"I could," he admitted, "but it's hopeless. Who would do such a thing, and how could we permit them?"

"Do you truly believe in God, John?" she demanded intently.

"With all my soul."

"Why don't you trust Him?"

"Oh, Flora—mockery. If you don't believe——"

"I don't know if I do or not. I've had reasons for doubts," she said with scorn in her voice. "But how is it I've got trust when you've got none?"

"Perhaps you have faith of a kind, if no belief."

"John."

"John," she repeated in a tone of great tenderness, "I want you to do something." She placed one arm confidently round his shoulders and whispering in his ear like a coaxing child, said: "John, I want you to kiss me."

Grant turned on her a startled glance and shook his head.

"Just once, John. Is it fair I've got to plead?"

He repulsed her with a hasty movement and rose, without the girl relaxing her hold or quenching the appeal in her eyes.

"If you knew why, John," she said smilingly, "—but I won't attempt to kiss you. I want *you* to kiss *me*. It's only once, John. I'll never ask of you again. I promise you, and you'll know I've kept my promise. Surely you won't grudge me that."

Grant looked hesitatingly at the appealing girl, and she saw his lean ascetic features change with a passion of longing. She was almost startled, but even as his eyes betrayed the mood it was replaced by fear, and he thrust her roughly away. "You're always tempting me." He raised his hand as if to strike her. "You were well trained," he said.

He went to his room, leaving the girl stunned by the cruel words. She sat down limply, tears welling slowly to her eyes. The hours passed languidly. Her first mood of patient hope faded from her. She sat waiting in bitter quiescence, for he did not return. When ten struck she knocked on



his door and asked if he was in bed. He said that he was, and she bade him good night.

Grant lay awake, restless and unhappy. The cool reception accorded him on what was to have been the greatest night of his crusade and the savage exposure in the morning paper together left him crushed. A strange new sense of impotency descended upon him. He hoped that it could all be proved a dream. A doubt stole into his sense, insistently, and he wondered if all his enthusiasms had been worth their voicing. They had been worth it, he told himself. They were well worth it. But those who had hearkened to him could make their choice. If they preferred others they were entitled to their choice. If they preferred the banalities of a comedian, that choice was theirs; they would not be worthy of any other. They would be beyond hope, or prayer. As they desired so would they receive.

The tear-begrutten features of Flora came before him then, and he pondered wonderingly on the bright optimism of her soul, upon the sordid and joyful complexities of her existence. Intense pity for her entered

him, mingled with cold resentment that she had been the unwitting means of harming him. Verily, he had saved her and she had slain him.

Outside the wind rose higher, and it whistled eerily in the chimney. He moved restlessly, impatient of his present lot, and thought of past days of hunger when he had been happy.

He prayed, asking for unabated faith and hope, and freedom from all earthly and carnal moods. His lips moved silently in intercession; he asked for grace for Flora, and tranquillity for her. He desired peace amongst mankind, and happiness for the joyless, food for the hungry, justice for the oppressed. Into his shadowed eyes crept terror as he reiterated the spiritual needs of his heart, his necessity for continuous renunciation. He flung his arms behind his head and gazed blankly at the ribbed pattern on the ceiling made by the shadow of the venetian blind. Exhaustedly he sank into slumber that was like a reluctant drug.

He awoke in the attitude of listening that results from interrupted sleep. But he heard nothing save the sobbing of the wind, swell-

ing suddenly and fading to great distances. He thought it must be late, for there was no sound, not even the sound of a car—nothing but the sound of someone descending the outside steps.

The noise of the footsteps faded down the street in a gust of wind. He listened to them with idle impatience, marvelling at the hardihood of any woman going home alone in such a night, perhaps through deserted streets. For it had been a woman's light step. On that thought he sat erect, quick with apprehension. He listened for a moment, afraid to test his fears.

"Flora," he called suddenly, childishly.  
"Flora, are you there?"

He ran through the lobby, into whose darkness the kitchen fanlight cast an orange shaft. The light there was on full, but the apartment was empty and the bed had not been slept in. He stumbled back to his room and flung up the window-sash in time to see the familiar silhouette of Flora as she turned the corner of the street.

Filled with tormenting visions, he partly dressed and ran from the house. The bitter night fell upon him as he emerged to open air, stinging him with the icy rain and

howling awesome menace in his ears. He ran, frantically, and fear hammered at his heart.

When he reached the corner she was not visible. His eyes grew confused with the shadows of the high lamps in the thoroughfare and the swirl of glittering raindrops. He started to run again, with a horrid sensation of aimlessness in that broad deserted road, intersected by so many side-streets, so many exits to oblivion.

Beyond, he thought a figure was there; glimpsed a shadowy slip passing quickly by the palings of the church. His own echoing footbeats frightened him. The detachment and isolation of the buildings pierced him. Their forbidding loneliness! If they would fall together to prevent her passage! . . . If they would blare forth a volume of sound and a thousand shafts of light! . . . If they would stay that slight form, so recognizable now, for one single little moment with the pause of curiosity.

She walked with purpose, hastily, and now she was fully visible as she passed on to the pavement of the bridge. There her pace was slackened, she glanced over the parapet as she walked. She seemed incred-

ibly slight in the lamplight, in the slanting rain. Near the centre of the bridge she stopped, and without hesitation climbed over the parapet and stood poised for a second, gazing down to the black depth where the Kelvin ran and where its white frill of fall was moving silently.

She heard him then, and turned slowly, at first with unbelieving stupor. He lifted her unresisting to safety, and she leant against the balustrade with closed eyes.

When she looked she read in him what she had never seen before. She sighed deeply, and again, and stared down at the swollen waters. Turning from that she trembled violently, thinking of the understanding that had almost come too late.

"Have I not to do it, John?" she asked him simply.

Bending, he placed his lips to hers. He held her, distraught, as if each second was their last. Flora gazed at him timidly, smoothing his hair with trembling fingers.

"I thought it would help, John. I thought it wouldn't matter. Would it have helped, John?" Her smile was sublime. But the man could only hold her, voiceless,



in the relief to his reproach, in the belated wonder of discovery.

Together they turned to the way by which they had come, on the hard and shining pavements, under the weeping sky.

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